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THE
PRIVATEER'S CRUISE,
AND THE
BRIDE OF POMFRET HALL.

A SEA TALE OF '76.

BY HARRY CAVENDISH,
AUTHOR OF DIME NOVEL No. 398, "BLACK ROVER."

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THE PRIVATEER'S CRUISE.

CHAPTER L

THE WRECK.

THE parting word had been said, the last look had been taken, and my traps had all been snugly stowed away in the narrow room which, for some years, was to be my home. I stood by the starboard railing, gazing back on the dear city I was leaving, and, despite the stoicism I had affected when bidding farewell to my friends, I could not now prevent a starting tear. Nor did my messmates seem in a more sportive mood; for they could be seen, some in the rigging and some leaning over the ship's side, looking back on the well-known landmarks of the town with a seriousness in their aspect which betokened the thoughts passing through the heart. Yes! we were about leaving the scenes of our boyhood, to enter on a new and untried life — and who knew if any of us would ever return again to our homes? The chances of war are at all times dreadful, but in our case they were terribly increased by the flag under which we sailed. Who could tell whether the officers of the revolted colonies might not be considered as traitors as well as rebels? Who knew but that the very first enemy we should meet would either sink or hang us at the yard-arm? And yet, firm in the righteousness of our cause, and confiding in the God of battles, there was not one of our number who, having put his hand to the plow, wished to turn back. Sink or swim — live or die — we were resigned to either destiny.

Evening was closing fast around the scene, and, even as I gazed, the town melted into gloom, Copp's Hill alone standing up in solemn majesty over the shadowy city. The distant hum of the town died fainter and fainter on the darkness, the evening breeze came up fresher across the waters, the song of the fisherman and the dip of passing oars ceased, and, one by one, the white sails of the ships around us faded away, at first seeming like faint clouds, but finally losing themselves altogether in the darkness. All around was still. The low monotonous ground-swell heaving under our counter, and rippling faintly as it went, alone broke the witching silence. Not a breath of air was stirring. The boatswain's whistle was hushed, the whisper had died away, no footfall rose upon the stillness, but over shore and sea, earth and sky, man and inanimate creation, the same deep silence hung.

Gradually, however, the scene changed. Lights began to flash along the town and from the ships in port, and, in a few moments, the harbor was alive with a long line of effulgence. A half-subdued halo now hung over the city. The effect produced was like that of

magic. Here a ship lay almost buried in gloom — there one was thrown out in bold relief by the lights — now a tall warehouse rose shadowy into the sky, and now one might be seen almost as distinctly as at noonday. The lights streaming from the cabin windows and dancing along the bay, the swell tinged on its crest with silver, but dark as night below, and the far-off sails gleaming like shadowy specters through the uncertain light, added double effect to the picture. And when the stars came out, one by one, blinking high up in the firmament, and the wind began to sigh across the bay and wail sadly through our rigging, the weird-like character of the prospect grew beyond description. Hour after hour passed away, and we still continued gazing on the scene as if under the influence of some magician's spell; but, at length, exhausted nature gave way, and one after another went below, leaving only those on deck whose duty required their presence. For myself, though I sought my hammock, a succession of wild indistinct dreams haunted me throughout the livelong night.

A pleasant breeze was singing through the rigging as I mounted the gangway at dawn, and the tide having already made, I knew no time would be lost in getting under weigh. Directly the captain made his appearance, and, after a few whispered words, the pilot issued his orders. In an instant all was bustle. The boatswain's whistle, calling all hands to their duty, was heard shrieking through the ship, and then came the quick, hurried tread of many feet, as the men swarmed to their stations. The anchor was soon hove short; the sails were loosed; the topsails, top-gallant-sails and royals were sheeted home and hoisted; the head yards were braced aback and the after yards filled away; a sheer was made with the helm; the anchor was tripped; the jib was hoisted; and as she paid beautifully off, the foretop-sail was filled merrily away, and the spanker hauled out. Then the yards were trimmed, the anchor catted, and with a light breeze urging us on, we stood gallantly down the bay. As we increased our distance from the town, the wind gradually freshened. One after another of the green islands around us faded astern; the heights of Nahant opened ahead, glanced by and frowned in our wake; and before the sun had been many hours on his course, we were rolling our yard-arms in a stiff breeze, leagues to sea. Before sundown the distant coast had vanished from sight.

My messmates had already gathered around the table in the long narrow room which was appropriated to the midshipmen, when I dove down the hatchway after the watch had been set. They were as jovial a set as I had ever seen, and, although our acquaintance was but of twenty-four hours standing, we all felt perfectly at home with each other; and as the salt beef was pushed from hand to hand, and the jug passed merrily around, the mutual laugh and jest bore token of our "right good fellowship."

"A pretty craft, my lads," said a tall, fine-looking fellow, obviously the senior of the group, and whom I had been introduced to as a Mr. O'Hara; "a pretty craft and a bold captain we have, n"

I'm no judge. I've been at sea before, but never in as gallant a ship as this. Here's success to THE ARROW — no heel-taps."

The toast was drunk with a huzza, and O'Hara continued the conversation, as if, under the circumstances, he felt that he was the only proper person to play the host.

" You're most of you greenhorns, my boys — excuse the word, but 'tell the truth,' you know — and will not be good for much if this swell continues. One or two of you are getting pale already, and, if I'm not mistaken, Cavendish and I are the only two of the set that have smelt salt-water before. Now, take a word of advice. Cut into the beef like the deuce, never mind if it does make you worse, cut away still, and by-and-bye, when you get all your long-shore swash out of you, you'll find that you feel better than ever. " We're for a long voyage, and many a hard rub you'll get before its over, but never flinch from duty or danger — even if Davy Jones himself stares you in the face. Kick care to the wall, and be merry while you may. But always have an eye to what is due to your superiors. The captain's a gentleman. God bless him! The first lieutenant, I've a notion, is a sour sinner — never let him catch you tripping, — but you needn't mind him further, for he looks as if he ought to be tarred and feathered as the Boston boys served the exciseman. And now, lads, here's to a prosperous voyage, and let's turn in, one and all, for I've got the morning watch, and I've a notion this breeze will have settled down into a regular hurricane, and be blowing great guns and marline-spikes before then."

The air of easy good-humor with which O'Hara spoke, attracted me to him at once. He was evidently my senior, and had seen some service; but it was equally as evident that he affected no superiority which was not his of right. I determined to know him better.

It was still dark when I was aroused from sleep by the calling of the watch, and, hastily springing up, I soon stood upon the deck. The first glance around me proved that O'Hara's anticipations were fulfilled, for the tempest was thundering through the rigging with an almost stunning voice, driving the fine spray wildly along, and blowing with an intensity that threatened to sweep one overboard. The men bent before the blast, and wrapped in their thick over-coats, stood like statues half seen through the mist. The night was bitterly cold — the fine spray cut to the marrow. As far as the eye could see, on every hand around us, the sea, flattened until it was nearly as level as a table, was a mass of driving foam. The binnacle lamp burned faint and dim, with a sickly hallo, through the fog. Above, however, all was clear, except a few white, fleecy clouds driven wildly across the frosty stars that twinkled in the heavens. As I ran my eye along the tall taper masts, now bending like rushes in the hurricane, I saw that nearly all the canvas had been taken in, and that we were scudding before the tempest with nothing spread but a close-reefed maintop-sail, a reefed fore-course, and the fore-topmast staysail, and even these, as they strained in the gale, threatened momently to blow out into ribbons before the resistless fury of

the wind. Under this comparative press of canvas THE ARROW was skimming along, seeming to outvie even the spray in velocity. And well was it that she sped onward with such hot haste! — for, on looking astern, I saw the billows howling after us, urging on their white crests in fearful proximity, and threatening at every surge to roll in over our taffrail. Wilder and wilder, more and even more fiercely they raced each other in the pursuit, like a pack of famished wolves pitching and yelling after their prey.

"Keep her so," said the first lieutenant, as he left the deck in charge of his successor, "for you see it is neck and neck with those yelling monsters astern. If the sails are blown from the bolt-ropes they must go — but as the canvas is new I think they will stand."

"Ship ahoy!" shouted a look-out at this moment, starting up as though a thunderbolt had fallen at our feet, "a sail athwart hawse."

"Where, where?" exclaimed both the officers incredulously.

"Close under our fore-foot — a brig, sir."

"My God, we shall run her down," was the exclamation of the second lieutenant.

All eyes were instantly turned in the direction of the approaching danger, and there, sure enough, directly athwart our hawse, a small, trim-looking brig was seen lying-to — the wild hurricane of flying spray, which covered the surface of the deck in places with an almost impervious fog, having hitherto concealed her from our sight. It was evident that the inmates of the brig had but just discovered us for her helm was rapidly shifted, and a few hurried orders, whose import we could not make out, were given on board of her. All, indeed, seemed confusion on the decks of the unhappy craft. Her crew were hurrying to and fro; the officer of the vessel was shouting in his hoarsest tone; two or three forms, as if those of passengers, rushed to the companion way; and to crown all, the sheets were let fly, and with a wild lurch she rolled over, and lay the next moment wallowing in the sea, broadside on. I could almost have jumped on her decks. All this had passed with the rapidity of thought. Never shall I forget the shriek of horror which burst simultaneously from both vessels at this fearful crisis. Already were we close on to the brig, driving with the speed of a sea-gull with the gale, and we knew that before another moment should elapse, ay! almost before another breath could be drawn, the collision must take place. But the lightning is not quicker than the officer of the deck.

"Port — a port — ha-a-rd, *hard*," he thundered, grinding the words betwixt his teeth in his excitement, and waving his hand to larboard, and the helmsman, taking his cue more from the gesture than from the words — for in the uproar of the tempest he could not hear a dozen yards to windward — whirled around the wheel, and our gallant craft, obedient to the impulse like a steed beneath the spur, swept around to starboard. For a second the ill-fated brig could be seen, dancing under our stem, and then, rolling heavily around, she seemed as if she would escape, though narrowly, from her frightful position. A cry of joy was already rising to my lips; but, at that

instant, I heard a crash, followed by a dull grinding noise, and simultaneously I beheld the brig come into collision with us just abaft the cathead, and, while all our timbers quivered with the shock, she whirled away astern, rolling and rubbing frightfully, and half buried in the brine. A shriek rent the air on the instant, whose thrilling tones haunted me for days and nights, and seems even now to ring in my ears.

"God of my fathers!" I exclaimed, "every soul will be lost!"

"Heave her to," thundered the officer of the deck. "For life or death, my lads! Up with the foresail — down with your helm — brace up your after-yards — set the mizzen staysail there."

It is a libel on sailors to say they never feel. No men are more ready to aid the unfortunate. On the present occasion the crew seemed inspired with an energy equal to that of their officer, and springing to their duty performed the rapid orders of the lieutenant in an almost incredible space of time. Happily a momentary lull aided the manœuvre, and our proud craft obeying her helm, came gallantly to.

"Meet her there, quarter-master," continued the officer of the deck; "set the main-staysail — brace up the fore-yards — merrily, merrily — there she has it —" and as these concluding words left his mouth, the manœuvre was finished, and we rode against the wind, rising and falling on the swell, and flinging the spray to our fore-yard arm as we thumped against the seas.

My first thought was of the brig. As soon, therefore, as our craft had been hove-to, I cast a hurried glance over the starboard bow to search for the unfortunate vessel. I detected her at once lying a short distance on our weather-bow, — and it was evident that the injury she had sustained was of the most serious character, for even through the mist we fancied we could see that she was settling deeper in the water. Her officers were endeavoring to heave her to again while rising over their orders, and swelling above all the uproar of the hurricane, we could hear the despairing wail of her passengers. At length she lay-to a few fathoms on our starboard-bow, drifting however, at every surge bodily to leeward. Confusion still reigned on her decks. We could see that the crew were at the pumps; but they appeared to work moodily and with little heart; and we caught now and then the sound of voices as if of the officers in expostulation with the men. A group of female figures also was discernible on the quarter-deck, and a manly form was visible in the midst, as if exhorting them to courage. At the sight a thrill of anguish ran through our breasts. We would have laid down our lives to save them from what appeared to be their inevitable doom, and yet what could we do in the face of such a tempest, and when any attempt to rescue them would only entail ruin on the adventurers, without aiding those we would preserve? As I thought of the impossibility of rendering succor to those shrinking females, as I dwelt on the lingering agonies they would have to endure, as I pictured to myself the brig sinking before our eyes, and we all powerless to prevent it, a thrill of horror

shivered through every nerve of my system, my blood ran cold, my brain reeled around, and I could with difficulty prevent myself from falling, so great was my emotion. But rallying my spirits, I tried to persuade myself it was all a dream. I strained my eyes through the mist to see whether I might not be mistaken — to discover if possible some hope for the forlorn beings on board the brig. But, alas — it was in vain. There were the white dresses blowing about in the gale as the two females knelt on the deck and clung to the knees of their protector — there was the crew mustered at the pumps, while jets of brine were pouring from the scuppers — and there were the crushed and splintered bulwarks betokening that the efforts of the men were dictated by no idle fears. I groaned again in agony. Had it been my own fate to perish thus, I could have borne my doom without a murmur; but to see fellow-creatures perishing before my sight, without my having the power to succor them, was more than I could endure. I closed my eyes on the dreadful scene. Nor were my emotions confined to myself. Not a heart of our vast crew that did not beat with sympathy for our unhappy victims. Old and young, officers and men, hardy veterans and eager volunteers, all alike owned the impulses of humanity, and stood gazing, silent, spell-bound, and horror-struck, on the ill-fated brig and her despairing passengers. At this instant a gray-haired man, whom we knew at once to be her skipper, sprung into the main-rigging of the wreck, and placing his hands to his mouth, while his long silvery locks blew out disheveled on the gale, shouted :

“ We — are — sink-ing ! ” and, as he ceased, a shiver ran through our crew.

“ God help us,” said the captain, for that officer had now reached the deck, “ can we do nothing for them. And to see them sink before our eyes ! But yet I will not despair,” and raising his voice, he shouted, “ can’t you hold on until morning, or until the gale subsides a little ? ”

The skipper of the brig saw by our captain’s gestures, that he had hailed, but the old man could not hear the words in the uproar of the gale, and he shook his head despondingly.

“ We are sinking ? ” he shouted again; “ there is a foot of water in the hold, and the sea is pouring in like a cataract. We have been stove.”

Never shall I forget that moment, for, to our excited imaginations, it seemed as if the brig was visibly going down as the skipper ceased speaking. His words sounded in our ears like the knell of hope. A pause of several seconds ensued — a deep, solemn, awe-inspiring pause — during which every eye was fixed on the battered vessel. Each man held his breath, and looked in the direction of the brig, as she rose and fell on the surges, fearful least the next billow would submerge her forever. We all saw that it was useless to attempt holding any communication with her, for no human voice, even though speaking in a voice of thunder, could be heard against the gale. The two vessels were, moreover rapidly increasing the space betwixt them,

— and, although objects on the deck of the brig had been at first clearly perceptible in the starlight, they had gradually grown dimmer as she receded from us, until now they could scarcely be seen. There was no alternative, therefore, but to abandon her to her fate. The skipper of the brig seemed to have been sensible of this, for, after having remained in the main rigging watching us for several moments longer, he finally descended to the deck, waving his hand mournfully in adieu.

Meantime the aspect of the heavens had materially changed. When I first came on deck, the stars, I have said, were still bright on high, with only a few small clouds now and then crossing each other over the firmament. Even then, however, I had noticed a small black cloud extending across the western horizon, and giving an ominous aspect to the whole of that quarter of the sky. But during the last half-hour my attention had been so engrossed by the events I have just related, that I lost all consciousness of this circumstance. Now, however, the increasing darkness recalled it to my mind. I looked up. Already dark and ragged clouds, presagers of the vast body of vapors following behind, were dimming the stars overhead, now wrapping the decks in almost total darkness, and now flattening by turns, leaving us once more in a dim and shadowy light, through which the moon looked out like a gigantic specter. The wind had perceptibly increased, while the sea had risen in proportion. The spray no longer flew by in showers, but the white caps of the billows as they rolled up in the uncertain light, had a glasiness that thrilled the heart with a strange emotion, almost amounting to superstition. The ship strained and creaked as she rose heavily on the bows, or struck suddenly far down in the abyss; while ever and again the sea would strike on her bows like a forge-hammer, breaking in showers of spray high over the forecastle, and often sending its foam as far back as the main hatchway.

The darkness of vapors meanwhile had attained the zenith, and was rapidly moving onward toward the opposite horizon. Directly it was held nearly altogether away, while a total darkness shrouded in its folds. Even then, however, a few stars could be seen low in the eastern seaboard, twinkling sharp and serene, just under the edge of that ominous cloud, but existing only a faint and dreary remnant of them, and in vain attempting to penetrate the gloom that reigned up in the sky. The brig was last seen to the northwest, where the darkness had become most intense. She was still doubtless in that quarter, but no trace of her could be discerned.

"It's as black up yonder as the eye of death," said the captain, "and I never seen nothing there but a dense, impenetrable shadow — for's sake is better, Mr. Inval," he continued, addressing the first lieutenant, "can you take out anything?" The officer shook his head. "Well, we will look, at any rate. I would not have run foul of the maffrye nation!"

The bell rang out startlingly on the night, and every ear listened to the response. No answer came.

"Again!" said the captain.

"A-ho-o-y! — Hil-lo-o-o-o!"

A second of breathless suspense followed, and then another, when we were about giving up all hope; but at that instant a faint cry, — it might have been a wail or it might not, God knows! — came floating across the waste of waters. It fell on our listening ears like a lamentation for the dead.

"Heaven preserve us!" solemnly said the captain, "I'm afraid all is over with them."

"Amen!" ejaculated the lieutenant, and for an instant there was a breathless silence, as if each was too awe-struck to speak. Suddenly the huge sails flapped against the mast, collected again, and then whipped backward with a noise like thunder. The wind, it was electric. The captain started and spoke.

"The wind is shifting," he ejaculated, holding up his hand, after having first wet it slightly; "but the breeze is coming from the north. It will strike by the imminent. Let her stand away at first, but we'll heave to as soon as possible. I wouldn't for the world desert this neighborhood; God grant we may find the vestige of the living when morning dawns!"

The hurried orders of the officer of the deck to prepare for the coming hurricane had scarcely been given and executed, before it seemed to us as if we could see, even amid the darkness of inaccess to the north, the whirling motion of gigantic cords, and almost simultaneously with a roar as of ten thousand batteries, the new tempest was upon us. Its first fury was beyond description — surpassing imagination — defying belief. It howled, shrieked, and bellowed through the rigging in such awful and varied tones, that the oldest hearts were chilled with fear. It was as if the last convulsive throe of a world was at hand. It was as if the whole fury of the elements had been collected for one last effort — as if the mad nature, madly frantic by agony, had broke loose from her tormentors — as if the mighty deep itself, in her stricken狂暴, was thundersing its awful "despairance" on the eve of final dissolution. I could scarcely breathe, much less stand. I could only grasp a rope, fling myself almost prostrate, and await the successive blow of the storm, or the fumpling of our ship. — In less than several minutes, it appeared to me as if every second I was to be cast lost. Torrents of water, meanwhile, swept in sheets from the crevices of the hulls, were whirling like smoke-works a light gale, while the towering sargos, faintly seen in the spray, beat the gale, clasped each other in wild and rapid circling and whirling surges. All was darkness, bolts, and terror.

But happily the duration of the squall was proportioned to its intensity, and, in less than five minutes, the hurricane began to increase in violence. After the course of a short period, the gale, though still visible, although its power was still greater than before half an hour, however, we were lying to as near to our old position as we could attain, — having suffered no loss except loss of

our main-topail, which was blown from the bolt ropes in the first instant of the squall, but with a noise which was lost in the louder uproar of the wind.

"They have never survived this," said the captain in a melancholy tone, when we were once more snugly hove to; "how many men are in eternity the All-Seeing Eye only knows! Keep her here," he added after a pause, turning to descend to his cabin, and addressing the officer of the deck, "and with the first streak of light, if the gale shall have abated, as I suspect it will, cruise up to an all position, maintaining a sharp look-out in every direction. But I shall be under way by that time," and with the words, taking a last but fruitless look toward the west, he went below. In half an hour the crowded decks were deserted by all except the sailor-women; and no sound broke the whistle of the winds, except the tread of the men, or the cry of "all's well" passing from look-out to look-out along the decks.

With the first appearance of morning I was on deck. The gale had nearly given down; the clouds had broken away; and the stars were out again, clear and bright, in the firmament. Yet the waves still rolled mountain high around us, now hewing their snowy crests above us in the sky, and now rolling their dark bosoms far away under our stern. Morning slowly dawned. Gradually, one by one, the stars piled on high, and a faint shadowy streak of light began to spread along the eastern sea-board. Over the boundless expanse of waters around us no living object met the eye, so that, amidst the mysterious light, the sense of loneliness was overpowering. But I had no thought then, for aught except the ill-fated brig. I felt an unaccountable interest in her. It seemed as if some unknown sympathy existed betwixt me and those on board of her, as if my destiny in some mysterious manner was connected with theirs. I could not rest on deck, but ascending to the cross-trees I took my station there, and gazed out anxiously over the waste of waters. Our ship had, by this time, been put about, and we were now, as near as I could judge, in the vicinity of the spot where the collision occurred. The moment came which was either to realize or confirm my fears. A strange emotion took possession of me. My heart beat nervously, my breath came heavily, I trembled in every fibre of my system. I strained my eyes in every direction around, and, once or twice, as a bellow roared its white crest upward, I fancied I saw a sail, — but, alas! my agitation had deceived me, and all was a blank, watery waste around. For more than an hour we castled to and fro, but in vain. As time passed, and hope died away, the others and men, one by one left the rigging, until finally even the captain gave up the search, and issued a reluctant order to put the ship away on her course. At that instant I saw, far down on the starboard, what seemed to me a tiny sail; but as we sank in the trough of the sea the object faded from my sight. With eager eyes, I watched for it as we rose on the swell, and — God of my fathers! — it was the long-looked-for boat.

"A sail!" I shouted, almost in a phrensy; "They are in sight!" "Where away?" demanded the officer of the deck, while every eye swept the horizon in eager curiosity.

"On the lee-beam!"

"What do you make it out?"

"A ship's launch — crowded with human beings!"

"God be praised! — it is the brig's crew," ejaculated the captain. "Up with your helms, quartermaster — around with her all — there she comes," and as he spoke the gallant ship wheeled around and in a few moments the brig's launch was rocking under our bows.

The discipline of a man-of-war could scarcely suppress the earliest demonstrations of emotion on the part of the crew, when the sight of that tempest-tossed launch reached our decks. The sailors of the brig were instantly seized by our tars, and borne forward in triumph — while our superior grasped the hand of the rescued skipper with visible emotion. But when the two females, with their protector, an elderly, gentlemanly looking man, were safely landed on the quarter deck, every eye was at once attracted to the interesting group. Both the females were young and beautiful, but one was surprisingly lovely. As I gazed on her, it seemed as if some long-forgotten animal had come back to me; but in vain were my attempts to seize it reality. At this instant their protector spoke in reply to a question from the captain.

"It is indeed a miracle that we are saved. The brig went down in that fearful squall, and though we had taken to the launch, as a last hope, we did not believe we should live a minute in such a hurricane. But an Omnipotent Power preserved us for the wise ends. All night long we were tossed at the mercy of the waves. We saw you sailing before you saw us, and thought that you had given up the search, when suddenly your heel was brought around in our direction — and here we stand on your decks. To whom are we indebted for our delivery? We owe him our eternal gratitude."

All eyes were instantly turned towards me, and the captain, taking me by the hand, said,

"Mr. Cavelish has that enviable honor," at the same time presenting me.

"Cavelish!" exclaimed a silvery female voice in delight and surprise.

At the mention of that name I looked up with eager curiosity, and saw the eyes of the lovely speaker fixed upon me, as if in recognition. She crimsoned to the brow at my eager glance, and as she did so, the crowd of dim recollections in my mind assumed a luminous shape, and I recognized in that sweet smile, in that delicately tinted cheek, in those now tearful eyes, in that last gasp brow, the features of my old playmate ANNIE!

"Cavelish — what, little Henry Cavelish?" exclaimed the gentleman, eagerly seizing my hand. "Yes! it is ever so long ago the years that have passed since you used to visit Powder Hall here.

almost eradicated your features from my memory. God bless you, my silent young friend! We owe you our lives — our all."

The scene that ensued I will not attempt to describe. Suffice it to say I retired that night with a whirl of strange emotions at my heart.

CHAPTER II.

THE ESCAPE

The night after the rescue of the passengers and crew of the brig was to me a restless one. I could not sleep. Hour after hour I lay in my hammock eagerly courting repose, but unable to find it, for the images of the past crowded on my brain, and kept me in a feverish excitement that drove slumber from my pillow. My thoughts were of my boyhood,—of Pemfret Hall,—of my early schoolmate — and of his little seraph-like sister, Annette. I was back once more in the sunny past. Friends whom I had long forgotten,—scenes which had become strangers to me,—faces which I once knew, but which had fled from my memory, came thronging back upon me, as if by some magic impulse, until I seemed to be once more shouting by the brooks, leaping over the hills, or singing at the side of sweet Annette at Pemfret Hall.

I was the son of a decayed family. My parents lived in honorable poverty. But, though reduced in fortune, they had lost none of the spirit of their ancestors. Their ambition was to see their son a gentleman, a man of education. I had accordingly been early put to school, preparatory to a college education. Here I met with a youth of my own age, a proud, high-spirited, generous boy, Stanhope St. Clair. He was the heir of a wealthy and ancient family, whose residence, not far from Boston, combined baronial splendor with classic taste. We formed a fast friendship. He was a year or two my senior, and being stronger than myself, became my protector in our various school-fights; this united me to him by the tie of gratitude. During the vacation I spent a month at his house; here I met his little sister, a sweet-tempered, innocent fairy, some four or five years my junior. Even at that early age I experienced emotions toward her which I am even now weakly unable to analyze, but they came nearer the sentiment of love than any other feeling. She was so beautiful and sweet-tempered, so innocent and frank, so bright, sunny, and smiling, so infinitely superior to those of her age and sex I had been in the habit of associating with, that I soon learned to look on her with sentiments approaching to adoration. Yet I felt no reserve in her society. Her frankness made me perfectly

ly at home. We played, sung, and laughed together, as if life had nothing for us but sunshine and joy. How often did those old woods, the quaintly carved hall, the green and stabling lawn, ring with our gleesome merriment. We studied, too, together, and as I sat playfully at her feet, looking now on her back and now in her eyes, while her long silken tresses undulated in the breeze and the fire leaped over my face, I experienced sensations of strange pleasure unlike any thing I had ever experienced. At length the time came when I was to leave this Eden. I remember how desolate I felt on that day, but how from pride in my sex I struggled to hide my emotions. Annette made no attempt to conceal her sorrow. She flung herself into my arms and wept long and bitterly. It was the grief of a child, but it filled my heart with sunshine, and dwelt in my memory for years.

I returned to school, but my playmate was always in my thoughts. In dream or awake, at my tasks or in play, loitering under the forest-trees or wandering by the stream, in the noisy tumult of day or musing in the silent moonshine, the vision of that light-hearted and beauteous girl was ever present to my imagination. It may seem strange that such emotions should occupy the mind of a mere boy; but so it was. At length, however, St. Clair took sick and died. How bitter was my grief at this event. It was the first thing that taught me what real sorrow was. This occurrence broke up my intimacy with the St. Clair family, for, young as I was I could perceive that my presence would be a pain to the family, by continually reminding them of their lost boy. I never therefore visited Pomfret Hall again.—but often would I linger in this vicinity, hoping to catch a glance of Annette. But I was unsuccessful. I never saw her again. Our spheres of life were immeasurably separated, the circles in which she moved knew me not. We had no friends in common, and therefore no medium of communication. God knew whether she thought of me. Her parents, though kind, had always acted toward me as if an impassable barrier existed between the haughty St. Clairs and the beggarly Cavendish, and now that their son was no more they doubtless had forgotten me. Such thoughts filled my mind as I grew up. The busy avocations of life interfered, my father died and left me penniless, and, to procure a subsistence for my mother and myself, I went to sea. The dreams of my youth had long since given way to the cold realities of life,—and of all the sunny memories of childhood but one remained. That memory was of Annette.

I had seen Annette only for a moment, as the fatigue of the dredged, had confined herself and companion to the cabin during the day. How should we meet on the morrow? My heart throbbed at the recollection of her delighted recognition—would she greet me with the same joy when we met again? How would her father receive me? A thousand such thoughts kept me long awake—and at length I fell into a troubled sleep, it was to dream of Annette.

When I awoke, the morning watch was being called, and spring

ing from my hammock I was soon at my post on deck. The sky was clear, the waves had gone down, and a gentle breeze was singing through the rigging. To have gazed around on the almost untroubled scene would never have imagined the fury with which it had raged scarcely forty-eight hours before.

Early in the day Mr. St. Clair appeared on deck, and his first words were to renew his thanks to me of the day before. He alluded delicately to past times, and reproved me gently for having suffered the intimacy betwixt me and his family to decline. He could I by hoping that, in future, our friendship — for such we called it — would suffer no diminution.

I was attending, after breakfast, to the execution of an order forward, when, on turning my eyes ast, I saw the flutter of a woman's dress. My heart told me it was that of Annette, and, at the instant, she turned around. Our eyes met. Her smile of recognition was even sweeter than that of the day before. I bowed, but could not leave my duty, else I should have flown to her side. It is strange what emotions her smile awakened in my bosom. I could scarcely attend to the execution of my orders, so wilily did my brain whirl with feelings of ecstatic joy. At length my duty was performed. But then a new emotion seized me. I wished and yet I feared to join Annette. But I mustered courage to go ast, and no sooner had I reached the quarter-deck, than Mr. St. Clair beckoned me to his side.

"Annette," he said, "has scarcely yet given you her thanks. She has not forgotten you, indeed she was the first to recognize you yesterday. You remember, love, don't you?" he said, turning to his daughter, "the summer Mr. Cavenish spent with us at the Hall. It was you, I believe, who shed so many tears at his departure."

He said this gayly, but it called the color into his daughter's cheek. Perhaps he noticed this, for he instantly resumed in a different tone

"But see, Annette here comes the captain, and I suppose you will take a turn on the quarter-deck. Your cousin will accompany her, — Mr. Cavenish must be your chaperon."

We were still conversing when my attention was called away by the cry of the look-out that a sail was to be seen to windward. Instantly every eye was turned over the weather-beam, for she was the first sail that had been reported since the gale. An officer seized a glass, and, hurrying to the mast-head, reported that the stranger was considered a heavy craft, although, as yet, nothing but his royals could be seen. As we were beating up to the windward and the stranger was bearing free towards us, the distance betwixt the two vessels rapidly decreased, so that in a short time the upper sails of the stranger could be distinctly seen from the deck. His topgallant yards were now plainly visible from the cross-trees, and the officer alast reported that the stranger was either a heavy merchantman or a frigate. This increased the excitement on deck, for we knew that there were no vessels of that grade in our navy, and if the approaching sail should prove to be a man-of-war and an Englishman, our chances of escape would be slight, as he had the weather-gauge of

us, and appeared, from the velocity with which he approached us, to be a fast sailor. The officers crowded on the quarter-deck, the crew thronged every favorable point for a look-out, and the ladies, gathering around Mr. St. Clair and myself, gazed out as eagerly as ever, as in the direction of the stranger. At length her topsail was made fast.

"Ha!" said the captain, "he has an enormous swing — what think you of him, Mr. Massey?" he asked, shifting the glass violently, and handing it to his lieutenant.

The officer addressed took the telescope and gazed frankly on the stranger.

"I know that craft," he said, energetically, "she is a heavy frigate — the *Ajax* — I served in her some eight years ago. I know her by the peculiar lift of her topsail."

"Ah!" said the captain; "you are sure?" he cried, examining her through his glass again; "she does lift it — it is a heavy craft and we have but one chance — we shall sweep up to her."

"If you ask me," said the lieutenant, "I say no! — why, that craft can blow us out of the water in a couple of broadsides, and throws a weight of metal treble our own."

"Then there is but one thing to do — we must wear, and drop our heels — a stern chase is probably a long one."

During this conversation not a word had been spoken by our group; but I had noticed that when the Lieutenant mentioned the strength of the foe, the check of Amelie frazzled my spirits. Her emotion, however, continued but a moment. And when our ship had been wore, and we were running before the wind, her behavior betrayed none of that nervousness which characterized my cousin.

"Can they overtake us, Mr. Cavenish?" said her mother. "Oh! what a treacherous thing the sea is. Here we were, running only from Charleston to Boston, yet shipwrecked and driven west, — and now pursued by an enemy and perhaps destined to be captured."

"Fear not, sweet coz," laughingly said Amelie, "Mr. Cavenish will scarcely admit that any ship could catch the *Arrow*, and you see what a start we have in the race. Besides, I heard Captain Smyth just now say, that, when night comes, he will be able to drop the enemy all together. Are they passing us, Mr. Cavenish?"

"Oh, yes, they have been throwing out their lights all for the last quarter-of-an-hour — see, there goes one more of their lights."

"But will not we also spread more canvas?"

I was saved the necessity of a reply by an order from the officer of the deck to spread our studding-sails, and duty called me away. I left the ladies in the charge of Mr. St. Clair, and hurried to my post. For the next half hour I was so occupied that I had no opportunity to think of Amelie, and indeed the last of my time was spent below in superintending the work of the men. When I returned on deck the chase was progressing with vigor, and it was

very evident that *The Arrow*, though a fast siller, was hard pressed. Every stitch of canvas that could be made to draw was spread, but the stranger astern had, notwithstanding, considerably increased on the horizon since I left the deck. The officers were beginning to exchange anxious looks, and the faces of our passengers were an anxious expression. One or two of the elder members of the crew were sporting suspiciously at the stranger. The captain, however, wore an open front, but a close observer might have noticed that his superior glanced every moment at the purser, and then ran his eyes as if unconsciously up our canvas. At this moment the cry of "a sail" rang down from the mast-head, startling us as if we had heard a voice from the dead, for so intense had been the interest with which we had regarded our pursuer, that not an eye gazed in any direction except astern. The captain looked quickly around the cabin, and calling the look-out, shouted,

"Whereaway?"

"On the starboard-bow."

"What does he look like?" continued Captain Smythe to me, for I had taken the glass at once, and was now far on my way to the cross trees.

"He seems a craft about as heavy as our own."

"How now?" asked the captain, when sufficient space had opened to allow the topsails of the new visitor to be seen.

"She has the jolly cut of a rascal," I replied.

A short space of time — a delay of breathless interest — sufficed to betray the character of the ship ahead. She proved as I expected, a rascal. Nor were we long left in doubt as to her flag, for the red flag of St. George shot up to her yard, and a cannon-ball ricochetting across the waves, plumped into the sea a few fathoms ahead of our bow. For a moment we looked at each other in dismay at this new danger. We saw that we were beset. A powerful fire was closing up with us hand over hand astern, and a craft fully our equal was heading us off. Escape seemed impossible. The ladies were still kept the deck, turned pale and clinging closer to their protector's arm. The crew were glumly. The officers looked perplexed. But the imperturbable calm of the captain suffered no diminution. He had already ordered the crew to their quarters, and the ladies were now strewn with preparations for the strife.

"We will fight him," he said; "we will cripple or sink him, and then keep on our way. But let not a shot be fired until I give the word. Steady, quarter-master steady."

By this time I had descended to the deck, ready to take my post at quarters. The ladies still kept the deck, but the captain's eye happened to fall on them, the stern expression of his countenance gave way to one of a milder character, and, approaching them he said,

"I am afraid, my dear Miss St. Clair, that this will scarce be no place for you or your brother. Allow me to send you to a place of safety. Ah! here is Mr. Cavenish, he will conduct you below."

"Oh! Mr. Cavendish," said Isabel, with a tremulous voice, "is there any chance of escape?"

Annette did not speak, but she looked up into my face with an anxious expression, while the color went and came in her cheeks. My answer was a confident assertion of victory, although, God knows, I scarcely dared to entertain the hope of such a result. It reassured my fair companions, however, and I thought that the eyes of Annette at least expressed the gratitude which did not find vent in words.

"We will not forget you in our prayers," said Isabel, as I prepared to reascend to the deck; "farewell — may — may we meet again!" and she extended her hand.

"God bless you and our other defenders," said Annette. She would have added more, but her voice lost its firmness. She could only extend her hand. I grasped it, pressed it betwixt both of mine, and then tore myself away. As I turned from them, I thought I heard a sob. I know that a tear-drop was on that delicate hand when I pressed it in my own.

When I reached the deck, I found Mr. St. Clair already at his post for he had volunteered to aid in the approaching combat. Nor was that combat long delayed. We were now close on to the corvette, but yet not a shot had been fired from our batteries, although the enemy was beginning a rapid and furious enfilade, under which our brave tars chafed like chained lions. Many a tanned and sun-browned veteran glared fiercely on the foe, and even looked curiously and doubtfully on his officers, as the bells of the corvette came hustling rapidly and more rapidly towards us, and when at length a shot dismounted one of our carriages and killed four of our brave fellows dead on the deck, the excitement of the men became almost uncontrollable. At this instant, however, the corvette yawed, bore up, and ran off with the wind on his quarter. Quick as lightning Captain Smythe availed himself of the trawl.

"Lay her alongside, quarter-master," he thundered.

"Ay, ay, sir," answered the old water-rat, and during a few breathless moments of suspense we crowded slightly after the corvette. That suspense, however was of short duration. We were now on the quarter of the enemy. The captain pressed his finger, but waving his sword, he shouted "FIRE," and simultaneously our broadside was poured in, like a hurricane of fire, on the foe. Not during ten minutes was there any intermission in our fire. The combat was terrible. The men jerked out their pieces like playthings, and we could soon hear over even the roar of the combat, the crashing of the enemy's hull and the falling of his sides. The rapidity and certainty of our fire meanwhile seemed to have paralyzed the foe, for his broadsides were delivered with but a trifling fury which we had been led to expect. His broadsides struck the deck by the board. The silence of our crew was now first broken, and a deafening huzza rose up from them, shaking the very walls with the uproar.

"Another broadside my brave fellows," said Captain Snyth, "and then lay about and crowd all sail—I think she'll hardly pursue us."

"Huzza, boys, pour it into her," shouted a grim-visaged captain of a gun; "give her a parting shake, huzza!"

Like a volcano in its might—like an earthquake reeling by—swept that fatal broadside on its errand. We did not pause to see what damage we had done, but while the ship yet quivered with the discharge, the men sprung aloft, and before the smoke had cleared away from the decks, our canvas was once more straining in the breeze, and we were rapidly leaving our late enemy. When the prospect cleared up, we could see her lying a hopeless wreck astern. The frigate which, daring the conflict, had drawn close upon us, was now sending her shots like hailstones over us, but when she and her consort she was forced to stop, as our late foe by this time had hung out a signal of distress. We could see that boats, laden with human beings, were putting off from the corvette to the frigate, which proved that our late antagonist was in a sinking condition. Before an hour she blew up with a tremendous explosion.

I was the first one to hurry below and relieve the suspense of Annette and her cousin by apprising them of our success. A few hours repaired the damage we had sustained, and before nightfall the frigate was out of sight astern. So ended our first conflict with the enemy.

CHAPTER III.

A DASH AT A CONVOY.

It was the second night after our brush with the corvette, when a party, composed of Mr. St. Clair, his niece and daughter, together with several of the officers, stood at the side of the ship. It was a lovely evening. The moon was high in heaven, sailing on in cloudless splendor; her silvery light tipping the tops of the billows, and stretching in a long line of glancing fire across the waters. A gentle breeze was singing, with a clear musical intonation, among the thousand tiny tuckets of the rigging. The water rippled pleasantly against the sides of the ship. Not far off lay a small rock, however, from which the sound of a blade, borne gaily on the night air floated in like a melody to our ears. The decks were in silence. The quietness seemed as if, by some magic spell, she had hushed the deep into silence, for scarcely a sound rose up from the heaving waves, which, glinting low in the wake of the moon, and now

sinking into sullen shadow, stretched away in the distance until they faded into the dim mystic haze of the distant sea-board. The whole scene was like a vision of romance.

The group which I have mentioned stood at the gangway of the ship. A boat was rocking gently below. The passengers, whom we had rescued from the brig, were about transferring themselves to the schooner lying-to a short distance off, which we had spied about an hour before, and which proved to be a small privateer bound in for Newport. As we were off Block Island and the run would consequently be a short one, Mr. St. Clair had resolved to avail himself of this opportunity to place his daughter and niece safely on shore. The party were now about to embark.

"I shall never forget your kindness," said Mr. St. Clair, addressing the captain, "and I am sure that my daughter and niece will give you their especial prayers, as the best return they can make for the obligations they owe you. And as for my son, Mr. Cavenish — I hardly know how to express my thanks. You will excuse and see us," he continued, turning frankly to me, and taking me by my hand, "Ponfret Hall will always open its doors gladly to welcome the preserver of its owner."

I promised that I would not forget it, and turned away to hide the emotion occasioned by the kind tone of Mr. St. Clair. As I turned away my eyes fell on Amelie. Her gaze was fixed on me with an expression I shall never forget, but which I would have given the world to have been able to interpret. There was an expression of the deepest interest in that look, and the eyes, I fancied, were actually humid. As soon as she caught my gaze, she blushed deeply, and looked down. What meant that earnest gaze — the sudden embarrassment? Did she then really love me? My heart beat fast, my brain fairly swam about, my emotion, for an instant, almost over-powered me. I could, if no one had been present, have rushed to her feet and told her my suit. But a moment's reflection checked the current of my thoughts. Perhaps she had noticed my feelings while her father had been speaking. If so, her silent countenance from being detected in observing me. I ran over every thing which had happened since she had been on board, and could find nothing corroborating, directly, the idea that she loved me. Her father had always been frank and kind; but what had he said or done to give me hope? As these thoughts rushed through my mind my towering hopes fell. The revulsion was extreme. I sank, and I was much as I had exulted but a moment before. I was about to turn gloomily away, when the voice of Isobel called me. I turned up. She was beckoning me gayly towards her as she stood on Amelie's deck.

"Why, I declare, Mr. Cavenish," she said, laughing, "you seem to be determined to let us depart with a heavy heart — a pretty gallant, you are, to be sure! Here is Amelie ready for you at your callness."

A look of silent reproach was the only reply of her cousin, who

had I not raise her eyes to mine. With the vacillation of a lover my sentiments again unloosed at a chance. Had Annette really been wondering at my coldness? How unjust then had been my suspicions. I clung eagerly to her side, yet when I had done so I knew not what to say. Isabel seemed not only to see my embarrassment but to enjoy it. She continued gayly —

"Here, now, do your *devoir* like a gallant knight and soldier — do you not have you no give or other favor for him to wear on his bosom — ?" Ah, too! the days of courtesy and chivalry have gone forever. But there — I see uncle ordering down my package : I can see that he does not let it drop clumsily overboard," and she tripped laughingly away.

Left almost *decoëte* with Annette — for every eye was at that moment turned to the gangway where some of the passengers were landing, and rising, I yet felt unable to avail myself of an opportunity for which I had longed. A single word would decide my fate, and yet that word I could not pronounce. My boldness had all disappeared, and I stood before that fair girl equally agitated with her. At length I looked up. She stole a furtive glance at me as I did so, and I flushed again to the very brow. I took her hand, it was hot with raven. Words of fire were already on my lips when the master turned towards us, saying —

"Annette, my love, they wait for you — Mr. Cavenish, a lost relative" — and as he spoke every eye was turned toward us. The master's moment was past. I could do nothing but lead Annette forward. Yet I ventured to press her hand. My senses deceived me, and it was faintly, though very faintly, returned. I would have given words, if I had them, for the delay of a minute, that I might learn my fate from the lips of that fair girl. But it was not to be. We were already in the center of the group. Mr. St. Clair took his daughter and I led her into the chair, and in another instant her wain was lowered in its descent to the boat. My heart died within me. The golden moment had passed, perhaps forever : for when should we meet again? New scenes, new friends, would in all probability drive me from Annette's remembrance before we should next see each other. These thoughts filled my mind as I leaned over the bulwark and twiced my heart while the boat put off. Mr. St. Clair stood by in the large, and bowed in return, while I thought I could see, the fair hand of Annette returning my parting adieu.

I watched the receding figures until they reached the schooner, and even after they had ascended the deck, and the two vessels had parted each on its own way, I continued gazing on the white dress of Annette until I could no longer detect the faintest shadow of it. When at length it disappeared totally in the distance, I felt a bitterness of the heart, such as no language can express. To a late hour I remained pensively walking the deck, unable to shake off this feeling, and it was only a gay remark of one of my messmates that kindly aroused me from my abstraction. I shook off my pensiveness, with a start, laughed gaily in reply, and soon sought my hammock.

as my spirits would not permit me much longer to carry on this double game.

For a week we cruised in the track of the homeward-bound fleet from the West Indies, but without success. During this time Amnette was constantly in my thoughts. Her last look — that gentle pressure of her hand thrice recurring every second, as often as they recurred to me. Never could I forget her — would she ever be able to think of me?

More than a week had passed, as I have said, since we had passed from the St. Clairs, yet still we had not spoken a word. At last, one day, when I had the morning watch, the look-out had seen from the cross-trees, that a sail was down on the starboard bow. Chase was instantly given to the stranger. The lookout was posted, and we were in consequence soon close enough to ascertain the character of our neighbor. She had not from the last signal identified us, and no sooner did we show our colors, than a flag up with the sign of France. We were going on different tracks, and so we were prodded, both ships lay-to for a moment's observation. The French merchantman was a noble ship, and as she came rapidly astern toward us, her long bowsprit struck the bow of the Amnette of the wave, and then, with a slow, swan-like motion, she passed on the ensuing swell until her bows were elevated almost clear of the water, while the bright copper decking with brise, glistened gaudily in the sunbeams.

The Frenchman backed his topsails as he drew near, and the two vessels stood head on, while we sent a boat on board. The merchantman proved to be upon her homeward passage, and had consequently no intelligence from Europe to furnish us. But the French skipper told us what was far more interesting to us. He informed that he had, but the day before, fallen in with the homeward-bound English fleet, from the West Indies, amounting to some sixty sail. The fleet was convoyed by four men-of-war. Our captain, however, resolved to have a dash at the convoy. He conceived the imprudent project of cutting off a portion of the fleet, under the very noses of the men-of-war. The French skipper wished us a "Good day," and the two vessels parted company.

We cracked on all sail, during the whole of the day and night. The next morning, at the dawn of day, our lookout descried the English fleet, on our larboard-side. Luckily, we had the wind in our favor. We kept crowding on our canvas, however, during the whole forenoon, and as we gained on the convoy, we saw our object sailing in the sea-board, until the whole horizon was filled with smoke, and the look-out reported more than fifty in sight. By this time the men-of-war had caught the alarm, and were firing guns to bring their flock around them. The fall-sails, however, did rapidly bind. This forced one of the English fleet to reverse the course, and run astern of the fleet. During the whole day we were sailing to windward of the fleet, but no demonstration was made on our side on the part of the men-of-war.

"A cowardly set, by the Lord Harry," said our old boatswain, who often beguiled a dull hour with a yarn. "Here are we giving them a chance for a fair fight, and the cowardly lubbers haven't the pluck to come up and take or give a thrashing. I can't stand such sneaking scoundrels — by St. George," and the old fellow energetically spat a stream of tobacco-juice from his mouth, as if from a force-pump.

"We'll have a brush with them, nevertheless, Hinton," said I. "Or I know nothing of the captain. He has got his eye on more than one rich prize in that fleet, and depend on it, he'll make a dash for it before long."

"Ay ! ay ! you're right," answered the boatswain, "and he'll do it, too, before two hours have struck in the morning watch."

The night shut in squally and dark. The fleet was some three miles to leeward, for during the whole day we had carefully maintained the weather-gage.

As the darkness increased we lost sight of the enemy's ships, but their numerous lights, glistening like stars along the sea-board, still pointed out to us their position. The wind was uncertain, now coming in fitful puffs, and then blowing steadily for a quarter-of-an-hour, when it would again die away and sweep in squalls across the waste of waters. Small clouds began to fly across the face of the heavens, obscuring the few stars, and giving a wild and ominous appearance to the firmament. Down to the west the sea-board was covered by a dense bank of clouds, out of which occasionally a flash of lightning would zig-zag, followed by a low, hoarse growl of distant thunder. It was evident that a tempest was raging, far down in that quarter. On the opposite horizon, however, the sky was nearly free from clouds, only a few fleecy vapors being discernible in that quarter, through which the bright stars twinkled clear and lustrious. The English fleet lay between these two opposite quarters of the horizon — the right wing of the convoy stretching down almost into the utter darkness in that direction, and the left wing skirting along the horizon to the eastward. All along the whole expanse of sea-board, more than fifty lights were now glittering, like so many fire-flies we get through the gloom along the edge of the forest on a summer eve. The scene was one of surpassing novelty, and drew forth the admiration of our veteran tars. Now and then the vipers in the east would clear entirely away, leaving the firmament in that deepest gloom, sparkling with thousands of stars; and then again the murky clouds would enclose them in nearly total darkness. Occasionally, and in contrast to this, a brighter flash of lightning would gleam, or a louder burst of thunder roll up from the dark bank of clouds in the tempest to the westward.

The night had scarcely settled down before the ship's course was altered, and we bore down upon the fleet — taking the precaution, however, to put out all the lights on board except the one at the binnacle. Meantime the men were called to quarters, the顶端 of the guns rung, the ammunition served out, pikes, cutlasses,

and firearms distributed among the crew, and every preparation made for action. As we drew nearer to the convoy the darkness of the night increased, until, at length, we could see but a few falcons ahead into the gloom. The eastern firmament now became wholly obscured. Not a star shone on high to guide us on our way. Had it not been for the long line of lights spreading along the eastern sky, we should have possessed no guide to our prey, — and in truth that the confidence felt by the enemy in his superior force could have induced him to continue his lights aboard without otherwise he might have run a chance of dropping us in the darkness. But he never dreamt of the bold swoop which we projected into the very midst of his flock. He would as soon have thought of our blocking the Thames, or burning the English fleet at Portsmouth.

The plan of Captain Snythe was indeed a bold one. Bearing right onward into the very center of the fleet, he intended to cut off one of the wings from the main body, and then board and take possession of as many of the merchantmen as he could carry in safety. We judged that the men-of-war were in the van, with the exception of a frigate which we had seen before midnight lying in the rear of the fleet to cover the larger merchantmen. This frigate, however, we supposed to be on the extreme right of the convoy. We therefore bore down for the opposite extremity of the fleet.

For more than an hour, while with every rig of canvas abraul we were hastening to overtake the convoy, scarcely a word was spoken by the crew, — but each man remained at his station, — watching the gradual diminution of the distance between us and the convoy. Indeed, silence was, in some measure, necessary to the success of our plot. Even the orders of the officers therefore were given and executed with as little bustle as possible. As the darkness increased we noticed that the lights ahead began to diminish in number, and it was not long before we became satisfied that the foe had at length awoke to the probability of our being in the vicinity. At length scarcely more than half a dozen lights were seen. These we judged to belong to the men-of-war, being kept alight for the enemy to steer by. !

The difficulty of our enterprise was now realized, for if the darkness should increase, there would be great danger of collision with one or another of the fleet. This peril, however, we shared in common with the merchantmen comprising the convoy. Our only precaution consisted in dropping our lanterns.

Another hour passed, during which we steered by the lights of the men-of-war. By the end of that period we had run, according to our calculation, into the very heart of the fleet, having a man-of-war broad on our larboard beam, a mile or two off. The latter vessel we judged to be the frigate which had been bearing us, and sighted in the rear of the fleet. Our anxiety now increased. We were surrounded, on every side, by the vessels of the convoy, and the obscurity was so profound that we could not see a pin-point on any

hand. Our progress, meantime, was continued in utter silence. The only sound we heard was the singing of the wind through the rigging, the occasional cheeping of a block, or the rushing of the water along our sides. Suddenly, however, I thought I heard a sound of the bracing of a yard right over our starboard bow.

"Hist!" I said to the boatswain, who happened that moment to be passing; "hist! do you hear that?"

The old fellow stopped, listened a moment, and then shaking his head, said,

"I hear nothing. What did you hear?"

"Hark! there it goes again," I said, as the sound of a sail dipping against a mast came distinctly out of the gloom.

"By St. George, you are right," exclaimed the old water rat. "ay! ay! young ears are after all the sharpest!"

He had scarcely spoken before the tall masts of a ship, like a spire rising through the night, lifted themselves up out of the darkness in the direction whence the sound had proceeded, and instantaneously we heard the tramping of many feet on the decks of the stranger, the rapid orders of the officers, the running of ropes, the cracking of yards, and the dull flapping of sails in the wind. At the same time a voice hailed,

"Look up, or you'll be into us," and then the same voice spoke, as if addressing the helmsman on board the stranger, "up with your helm — around, around with her — my God! we'll be about."

The consternation of the British skipper was not without cause. No sooner had Captain Saythe discovered our proximity to the stranger, than he termed the determination of running her aboard, taking her by a sally of our brave fellows, and then, after throwing into her a party sufficiently strong to maintain possession of her, keeping on his way. During the minute, therefore, that elapsed betwixt the discovery of the merchantman, and the hail of her English skipper, the boasters had been called away and the quarter-master ordered to run us bows on to the quarter of the stranger. Instead of running, therefore, we kept straight on in our course, and as a score of lanterns were instantly shown on board both ships, sufficient light was thrown over the scene to guide us in our manoeuvre. As the English ship were around, braving the wind on her starboard quarter, our helm was jammed to port, and as we were almost on our heel we shot up on the fore, straining her to stern gradually, which we crushed as we would have crushed an egg-shell. The English ship was heavily loaded, and in consequence of her low position high above her decks, a large a bridge on which our bravest might easily pass on board. At the moment we struck, the captain dashed forward, and summoning the boasters to follow him, had leaped, sword in hand, into the center of the stranger's crew, before her skipper had ceased giving orders to the desperadoes on deck, who were running to and fro on her decks, in the vain hope of preventing any damage resulting to them from this collision, with, as they thought, a faster vessel. The consternation

of the master may well be conceived when he found his ship in possession of an enemy. For some minutes he imagined it to be a jest, for he could not conceive how any foe could have the audacity to cut him out from the very heart of the fleet. His rapid change when he discovered his error, I shall never forget, nor the haggardness with which he consented to be transferred with a party of his men to the *Aurora*. In less than five minutes, however, this necessary precaution had been carried into effect, and a prize crew had in possession of the merchantman. The officer in command was ordered to haul out of the fleet, and gain a position as steady as I could to windward. Then the two ships were parted, and we stood away under fire on the larboard tack, while the prize crew sharp up, hauled her bowlines, and went off close into the wind's eye.

"By Jove," said a reefer, chafed with the part he had taken among the boarders, for he had been one of the first to step on the decks of the merchantman, "by Jupiter, but that was nicely done — eh! don't you think so, Hinton, my old boy?"

"Shut your dead-lights, you young jackanapes," growled the old boatswain, by no means pleased with such a salutation, "and keep your tongue for cheering against the enemy; you'll have enough of it to do before you turn in. Avast there! I say," he continued, perceiving that the youngster was about to interrupt him, "go to your post, or I'll report you, you young whelp. None of you, if I may say, as your thick tongued Irish messmate would say — away with you."

When Hinton's ire was up, the safest plan was to wait, for he would brook no retort unless from the captain or his mate. For the young reefers, especially those who were in his favor with him, he domineered with a rod of iron. The youngster, who had but waited for a moment, in the elation of his first victory, to see what he held the boatswain, was riddled by these words to a sense of the authority of the old tar, and he struck a hasty way, without a word to reply.

"Ay! go, you varmint," chuckled Hinton, as the boy had run to his post, "and give none of your long stories about the man who had learned before you were born to tell like a dog to the enemy as his first duty. Isn't it so, Mr. Chancery?"

I was a great favorite of the old fellow, and always made it a point of humoring him, so I nodded an assent to his remark, although I was tempted to ask him how long some had been in the fleet, in the quiet luxury of silence. I refrained, however, to question him, and the silence which would vain have protracted my visit to the deck of the old fellow, against what he chose to call the *first* man, was a sufficient proof of his displeasure. From this start, however, he soon condescended to exempt me. How long he would have continued this favorite subject, I knew not; but, at the moment, a bright ray came out of the gloom ahead, and every eye was instantaneously attracted in the direction from which the voice proceeded.

"Ship ahoy!" shouted an Herculean voice; "what craft is that?"

The tone of the speaker betrayed a latent suspicion that all was not well with us. Indeed, he must have been so close to us in our harbor, and with the merchantman, that he necessarily heard enough to awaken his doubts. As he spoke, too, the tall figure of the enemy's captain looked out from the obscurity, and while we were yet speaking as to the answer the captain would make, a dozen muskets flashed through as many open port-holes, revealed that our neighbor was a man-of-war.

"What ship is that?" thundered the voice, "answer or I'll fire into you!"

The impetuous captain waved his hand for the batteries to be unloosed, and springing into the mizzen-rigging, while a neighboring light-house now disclosed to the night, flung its light full upon his face, he shouted in an equally stentorian voice —

"This is the *Aurora* — commissioned by the good Commonwealth of —"

"Give it to the cutting rebel," roared the British officer, breaking in on his reply; "fire — for God and St. George — FIRE!"

"Ay! fire my brave boys," thundered our leader; "one and all, for the old thirteen — FIRE!"

From the moment when the enemy had disclosed his lighted ports, our gallant tars had been waiting, like hounds in the leash, for the signal which was to let them loose upon the foe. The silent gesture of the captain, when he sprang into the mizzen-rigging, had been latelately understood by the crew, and the orders of the proper officers were scarcely waited for, before the ports were opened, the broadsides unmasked, the guns run out and the whole deck illuminated, as if by magic, from a scene of almost Egyptian darkness to one of comparative light. Nor were the men less ready to discover the moment when to open their fire. The first word of the British officer's audacious interruption had scarcely been spoken, when the crew began to put their pieces and spirit knifewhely along them, and, at, when the command to fire was given, our whole broadside burst at once, like a volcano, and with deadly effect. Every gun boomed simultaneously, every shot was sent crashing into the foe. Not so the enemy. Although the British captain had certainly sounded with suspicion, his crew had apparently thought us a crew of the *Devon*; and the reply of our leader, and the order to fire, took them, after all, with surprise. Noting a moment's delay elapsed before they delivered their broadsides, the crew of the *Aurora* fired hotly and with little certainty of aim. The broadside was more effective than the easier six; and the advantage of the surprise was decided; for while we could hear the crack of their guns, and the shrieks of the wounded, following our discharge, the shot of the enemy passed mostly over our heads, and to my knowledge, not a man of our crew was killed. One poor fellow however, fell wounded at the gun next to mine.

"Huzza!" roared Hinton, leaping like a lion to fill the place of the injured man, "they've got 'er griz already. Here at 'em, my brave fellows, aye aye, and remember your mate. Jack 'e said, turning to the bleeding man, "every one must have a kick sometime in his life, and the sooner it's over, the better. Please her out, shipmates! Huzza for old Nantucket—the wind'll have it again on full allowance!"

For ten minutes the fight was maintained on our side with desperation. The enemy, at first, rallied and attempted to return our broadsides promptly, but the injuries she had sustained to her first discharge had disheartened her men, and, when they found the spirit with which we maintained our fire, they soon gave up the contest and deserted their guns. Still, however, the enemy did not stop. One or two of her forward guns were occasionally and still slightly discharged at us, but all systematic resistance had ceased in less than five minutes.

By this time, however, the whole fleet was in sight. Lights were flashing in every quarter of the horizon, and as the darkness had been clearing away since our brush with the first frigate, our lookout aloft could see through the faint, misty atmosphere, more than one vessel bearing down towards us. The majority, however, of the fleet, seemed to be stricken with a complete panic, and, like a flock of startled partridges, were hurrying from us, in every direction. It soon became apparent that the ships, bearing down upon us, were armed; and before we had been engaged ten minutes with our antagonist, no less than three men-of-war, from as many quarters of the horizon had opened a concentric fire on us, regardless of the damage they would do their consort. Still, however, a warning to leave his antagonist without compelling her to strike, our leader received. In his position and posted in a series of rapid fire, his ship was bound to fire up fearfully. Yet she would not strike. On the other hand, reanimated by the approach of her consorts, her men raised to her guns and began a run to reply to our broadsides. Meanwhile, the hostile frigates were closing up to us, hand over hand, increasing the rapidity of their advance as the distance between us lessened. Our situation was becoming increasingly imminent. Yet still, and our pilot my eye was intrepidly, it is still a very fine s—.

The next, I suppose, had partly cleared away, but the darkness was still sufficiently intense to render the approaching frigates but dimly visible, except when flushed by the guns of our antagonist. I held my gun, for the moment, with a steady hand, and, as I observed them, the tell-tale, and the determined lines of their crews. Often the whole three vessels would be hidden in the darkness, when it would seem to me that this was the case. Then, as the smoke settled on their decks, I could see their white faces, and, evidently, the men who had been in them huddled from their subterranean abodes. In this case, the scene was even more remarkable, for in the darkness, was apparently the nearest of the three men-of-war, and as she came up to

as close-hauled, she yawed whenever she fired, and then steadily decamped her pions, doing more damage than all her other consorts. The gaunt manner in which she delivered her fire— the measured, but unceasing, roar of her long twenty-four— and more than all, the jaggedness of the sky in the background, brought out into the bell-tower of my vessel, of her guns, an unparallel'd picture of gloomy grandeur, which the imagination can compare to nothing, except the mind, cast by a mass of light shooting across the darkness of that infernal region. Captain Snaythe pointed with his pen of horror. "While, however, I was gazing awe-struck on this scene, I noticed that the dark mass of clouds behind the frigate was visibly in motion, rolling up towards us. Our superior officer had, perhaps, noticed the same movement, and, knowing what it portended, had remained by his post, when otherwise our only chance of escape would have been speedy flight. Some of the older sailors now perceived the approaching tempest, and paused from the combat. Indeed, it was evident that all was to be lost. I had scarcely time to look once more in the direction of the other frigates, and then turn again to the westward, when, reverting to it in that quarter was completely shut in by the squall. The wind had, meantime, died away, leaving us rocking drearily in the swell. A space of a minute ensued, a pause of the most terrible suspense. The men had instinctively left their guns, and were awaiting the directions of their leaders to whom they looked in this emergency. We were happy nearly before the wind, which he could now be seen lashing the foam from the billows, and driving down upon us with the speed of a race-horse. Another instant and the squall would be upon us. All this, however, had passed, in less time than is occupied in the relation, for scarcely a minute had elapsed, since I first saw the approaching squall, before Captain Snaythe shouted,

"Stand by to clew down— quick there all!"

The command was not an instant too soon. His opening words were heard distinctly in the boisterous roar that preceded the squall, but the concluding sentence was lost in the hissing and tearing of the billows that now swept across our decks. The captain saw that it was useless to attempt to speak in the uproar, and, waving his hand for the quarter master to keep her away, while the men instinctively clewed down the top-sail yards, and hauled out the reef-topsails, he avoided the subsidence of the squall. For the minutes were not numbering before the tempest, like a snow-drift in a storm, came upon us, we drove, the fine spray lashing us on the starboard bow, and the sharp sound of the wind through our halyards, rattling our guns. Whether we were going, or wind press'd against the topsails, or not, however, we knew not. We were flying helplessly about, like wild birds at the mercy of the winds. The captain, however, if the squall had not have been so gusty, told by the wind and compass, and declared that we should run before the hurricane, as the only chance of escaping from the clutches of our foes. Yet, surrounded as we were by the merchandise of the port, we

knew not but the next moment we might run down some luckless craft, and perhaps, by the collision, save both them and ourselves.

For nearly half an hour we drove thus before the hurricane. More than once we fancied that we heard the shrieks of drowning men, rising high over all the uproar of the tempest, but whether they were in reality the cries of the dying, or only the delirious created by an over-heated imagination, and having no existence except in the brain of the hearer, God only knows! A thousand shapes of woe and death sank within a cable's length of us, and not a moan of the sufferers, not a shriek of despair have met our ears. There was a fearfulness in that palpable darkness, which struck the most veteran heart with an awe akin to fear. When men can look abroad and see the real extent of the peril which surrounds them they can dare almost any thing; but when surrounded by darkness, the imagination conjure up dangers in every storm-tossed cloud of the tempest, in every new outbreak of the surge. They tremble at what they can not behold; in the language of the Scripture, "their jaws are loosed with fear."

At length the fury of the squall began to subside, and the dark bank of clouds which had encircled us, unbound, rolled to and fro, and finally flew in ragged vapors away, leaving willy-nilly past the stars that once more twinkled in the sky. As the prospect brightened, we looked eagerly around to see what damage the squall had done. The fleet was scattered hither and thither over the billows torn, shattered, dismasted, powerless. Far up in the quarter to which the hurricane had burst could be faintly seen the bulk of the convoy; but on every hand around some of the less fortunate ships were discoverable. Whether, however, most of the merchantmen had attempted to lie-to, or whether we had scurried before the gale with the velocity which none could rival, it was evident that we had passed away like a thunderbolt from the rest of the fleet, leaving them at a hopeless distance astern.

Owing to the rapidity with which our cables had been cut in, we suffered no material injury; and, when the gale subsided and the wind came out again from the north, we lost not a moment in hoisting sail and getting the weather-side of the convoy. The sky was pale and more in team — the crew then turned in, and the waters were soon hoisted possession of the decks. As I stood at my post and watched the bright stars overhead, shining steadily upon the sea, I listened to the cry of "All's well!" passed from hand to hand across the deck. I could not help contrasting the peace and safety of the scene with the fearful uproar of the preceding hour.

Very unwillingly I awoke, not a vestige of the fleet remaining in the horizon to be seen. Our anxiety was now turned to the fate of the unfortunate we had captured, and that of the prize crew we had thrown into her. But toward the afternoon watch, a sun was discovered on the horizon to windward, and when we had approached within a proper distance we recognized our prize. Our joy at rejoining may well be imagined.

The prize proved to be laden with a valuable cargo, and, as this was the first capture of any moment we had made, it raised the spirits of the men in a commensurate degree. The skipper of the merchantman could never comprehend the justness of his capture. Like the general whom Napoleon has been beating at a later day, he protested that he had been taken against all the rules of war.

After keeping company with us for a few days the prize hauled up for the coast with the intention of going into Newport. We subsequently learned that she accomplished her aim, but not until she had run the gauntlet of an English fleet. As for ourselves, we stood toward the south, on the look-out for a new prize.

CHAPTER IV

THE PIRATE

It was a tropical night. The moon had gone down, but the stars shone clear and bright, with a brilliancy unknown to more temperate climes, painting a myriad of silvery lines along the smooth swell of the sleeping ocean. A light breeze was murmuring across the waves, now and then rippling the waves in the starlight, and flitting the reef-points occasionally against the sails. A heavy dew was falling, bringing with it, from the island that lay far up to windward, a thousand spicy odors mingled into one delicious perfume. On the extreme verge of the horizon hung a misty veil, veiling the sea-carb in obscurity. Up to windward the delicate gauze-like vapor was perceptible, and the position of the island, which we had taken at twilight, was only to be told from the dense masses of mist, that had gathered in one particular spot on the horizon in that quarter.

It was the morning watch, and I was standing, wrapped up in my thick jacket, looking out keenly on the ripples that played under our side in the starlight, when the tall voice of the boatman addressed me, at the same time that the old fellow wrung an old, old piece of tobacco from a still larger mass that he held in his brown hand.

"A starlight, Mr. Cavenish," began Hinton, "it looks as if the old salt-bee was dreamin', and had drawn around her that fog as a sort of curtain to keep herself quiet, as I've heard King George and other big folks do when they go to sleep. For my part, I've no notion of such sort of sleeping, for I'd starve to death if I had to be wrapt in every night like the Egyptian mummies that I've seen up the Straits. Give me a hammock for sleeping comfortable-like in —

I never slept out of one since I went to sea but once, and then I'd as lief have slept head downwards, for I didn't get a wink all night."

"You mean to say that you tried to sleep?" said I suddenly.

"Every— I'm no soldier, and none the worse for that, I think. Them as is born to live by hard work ought to be sent to lead horses and colleys and such high places,— but them as have to get a living by their hands had better leave home I ain't alone, for, take my word for it, it only ends in macking them rascals; and there's other ways of killing a dog without打死 him to death with lead and bitter. Them's my sentiments; and so when I've got to sleep, instead of skulking about the business in search of the bark, like the coons in the galley, I come out at once in the plain sight my masters taught me. The devil fly away with them that can't speak without sinking in their shoes lest they make a mistake. What's that expected of them can't be, and the gulls don't make such a noise, much less a good hootsman— the yell of the packing is in the crowing," and the old fellow puffed and took a long拉长的 reply.

He had scarcely done so, when he started, looked around, and turned as pale as ashes. A low, melancholy strain, such as you perceive the air, and even now can hear in a dull, low murmur, in every corner, could be distinctly heard from the deck of the ship. The prosecution had even passed, but on Hatteras it had an extemporary effect. Sailors are at all times superstitious, and old blind boatswain possessed a large share of this quality. These singular sounds, therefore, appealed to one of the strongest feelings in his bosom. He looked at me doubtfully, then down and out again, and listened attentively a moment in every direction. His scrutiny did not satisfy him, but rather increased his wonder. There could be no doubt that the sounds existed in reality, for, with all they died away for a moment now and then, they would almost entirely be heard again, apparently coming from the distant quarter of the horizon. The burden of the strain could not be distinctly heard, but I fancied I could recognize human voices in it, and I was fain to confess that I had never heard them uttered by such exquisite melody, for as the strain rose and fell in its course, it was swelling out clear and full as if sung almost at our ears, and then fading away in the distance until it died off. And the fainting of a wind-harp, I was tempted almost to say, like that of winged visitors. The old boatswain seemed to us both to be in the same case, for, drawing nearer to my side, he stood mutinously, and as if in awe, up to the mast-head; and I did the same with a blank and puzzled gaze. Presently, I thought, I saw my friend bear right before me, in my face.

My own astonishment, however, was but momentary. Having scanned the horizon, I had noted that the mast-head of the island had been, during the fifteen minutes that I had been thus looking over the ship's side, slowly creeping up toward us, and so

in every other direction, except down in the extreme distance, the sky was as clear as before. At first, moreover, my imagination had yielded to the impression that, as the strain died away on the night, it came out again from a different quarter of the horizon; but when, divesting myself of the momentary influence of my fancy, I began to analyze the causes of this phenomenon, I became satisfied that the sounds in reality arose out of the bank of clouds, to windward, and the horizon had been probably the rising and falling of the waves upon the night. When, therefore, the old boatswain turned to me with his bended bow, I had made up my mind as to the real cause of that which puzzled the veteran seaman.

"There is a craft up yonder in that fog," I said, pointing to windward, "and there are women on board, for the voices we hear are too sweet for those of men."

I said this with a calm smile, which at once dissipated the fear of my companion, for, after thinking a moment in silence, the puzzlement of his face gradually cleared away, and he replied with a low laugh, which I thought, notwithstanding, a little forced:

"You are right—and that's a reason for book-learnin' I never had out of before. Here have I sailed for a matter of forty years or so, and yet I couldna't exactly come at the cause of them same sounds, when you, who haven't been ten years on the water,—though I'd been a smart sailor, I must say, for your years—can tell at once what it is, just because you've had a regular education. Book-learnin' don't to be despised after all," he continued, shaking his head, "even for a boatswain, and, by the blessing of God, I'll borrow the good book of the person to-morrow and I go at it myself; for when I was a youngster I could spell, I declare, at the rate of a thousand words. But maybe," he concluded, his thoughts suddenly changing, "that craft up yonder may turn out a fat prize—we'll soon see what her is if the wind would only breeze up a little."

The wind, however, had now fallen to a dead calm, and the sails hung idly from the masts, while the ship rolled with a scarce perceptible motion upon the quiet sea. A current was setting in, however, to the island, and we were thus gradually borne nearer to the abomination. This soon became evident from the greater distinctness of the sounds, and at length I thought I could distinguish a few of the words sung, which seemed to be those of a Spanish air. As the night advanced the music ceased; but the silence did not long continue. Suddenly a shriek was heard rising fearfully on the air, followed by a strange mixture of noises, as if oaths, groans, and shrieks, and even sounds of mortal strife were all mingled in one hideous yell. The shriek was now repeated, with even more fury and violence; and then came the report of a pistol across the darkness. Our hearts beat with strange feelings. What nefarious deeds were being done on board the unseen craft? Huberto the captain, who had strayed on deck to enjoy the music, had said that he should have the power, or at least the appearance of a breeze, before overhauling the stranger, but now he came to the determination of

dering out the boats, and learning the cause of those fearful outcries.

"Some hellish work, I fear," he said, "is going on yonder; perhaps a piratical boat has boarded the craft, for the villains infest those islands. Board her at every risk, and then no mercy to the rebels if they are really at their work."

The boats were hastily lowered, manned, and shoved off from the side of the ship. The second lieutenant commanded one of the boats, and to me was delegated the charge of the other. We passed rapidly, and as noiselessly as possible, into the bank of clouds, and soon lost sight of The Arrow, although long after her had our spars had disappeared in the obscurity, her top-light was to be seen like a red baneful star, floating in the firmament. Our progress meanwhile, was the sounds of strife on board the infidel craft; but as we proceeded, the uproar died away, and for a few moments a profound silence reigned. Then came a few such plunges in the water which we were at no loss to understand. The men sprang to their oars with renewed vigor at the sounds. A perfect silence reigned once more, but we knew, from the distinctness with which we had heard the plunges, that we were close on to the craft. Steering in the direction, therefore, from which the sounds had come, we glided along the smooth surface of the sea with almost incredible velocity. Not a word was spoken, but the crewmen strained their sinews to the utmost, while the officers gazed intently into the gloom ahead. Each moment seemed an age. Scarcely a dozen short strokes of the oar had been given, however, when the outlines of a brig shot up, as if by magic, out of the mist ahead, and almost simultaneously a voice from the stranger hailed us in the Spanish tongue.

"Keep her to it, my lads — pull with a will," I said, as the boat commanded by the lieutenant dashed on without halting the hand.

"Boats a-hoy!" shouted another voice from the brig, and this time the words were in English; "lay on your oars, or we'll drop into you," and at the same time a score of heads was faintly seen crowding the bulwarks of the vessel.

"Dash into her, my brave lads!" exclaimed the lieutenant, standing up in the stern sheets and waving his sword aloft; "all that will, and we were up to them."

The men cheered in reply, and, with a jerk that made the ship tremble like willow winds, we shot up to the sides of the brig. But not unopposed; for almost before the lieutenant had ceased speaking, the dark villains, crowding the sides of the brig, poured in a rattling fire on us that would have checked man in the presence of a less holy object. But the character of the assault was well taken the brig had now become apparent, and every man of our crew, remembering that agonizing ditch, thirsted to revenge his sufferer. The voice of the pirates was not, however, as noisy as it might have been had they not been taken partly by surprise and been in consequence, without that preparation to meet us which

they otherwise would have shown. Their discharge, however, God knows, was deadly enough! The stroke overshot, but a few feet in advance of me, fell dead, across the thwart. But the other boat, being in a laure, suffered far more, for I saw several of the men stagger in their places, — while the lieutenant, springing up like a deer, tumbled headlong into the stern-sheets. He had been shot through the heart. The impetus, however, which the last gigantic stroke of the men had given to the boats, sent them onward to the brig, and we struck her side almost instantaneously with the full of my superior.

"Vengeance!" I shouted, "vengeance, my lads! follow me!" and springing into the forebains of the brig, I hopped from thence up on her deck, and found myself, the next moment, almost unsupported amidst a circle of desperate foes. But it was only for a moment, that I was left without aid. I had scarcely exchanged the last parry with a brawny desperado, who met me at the bulwark, when my gallant fellows came pouring in after me, inflamed to double fury by the loss we had suffered, and beokening by their keen, determined looks that the approaching conflict was to be one of determination or death. The pirates, seemingly aware of their situation, glared on us with the fury of wild-beasts, and sprang with snarls and yells to repel the boarders. This left me, for the instant, almost alone with my stalwart opponent, and had my cause been less righteous, or my skill at my weapon not a proverb, I should have trembled for my life. Rarely, indeed, have I seen a finer-looking or more muscular man than my opponent on that fatal night. He was a tall, sinewy Spaniard, of the pale olive complexion, with a dark, glittering, fearful eye, and a huge black musta such as I never saw on a man before or since. His head was bare, with the exception of a red scarf, which was bound around it in the form of a turban, the ends of which depended on the left side, as I have sometimes seen them fancifully arranged by the Creole girls of the islands. His shirt-collar was thrown open, displaying a broad and brawny chest that would have served as a model for that of an athlete. His arms were bared to above the elbow, and in his hand he held a common cutlass; but a brace of huge silver-mounted pistols, and a dagger with a splendidly ornamented hilt were thrust into the scarf he wore around his waist. I forgot to mention that a fandor [—], the jewels of which sparkled even in the comparative darkness, depended by a rich gold chain from his neck.

I was able to give this description of him, because when we found ourselves at last alone, we paused a moment, as men encaged in a cage might do, before continuing our strife. I say this, but do not I say that I was opposed to the leader of the pirates, and he seemed to feel that I held the same office among the assailants, for he gazed at me a moment, with a kind of proud satisfaction, but, however, settled down as his eye took in my comparatively slight proportions, to an expression of surging scorn. Our pause, though sufficiently long for me to observe all this, enlured but for

an instant, for the momentary admiration of my foe failed before that sneering expression, and making a blow at him with my cutlass, which he dexterously repelled, we were soon engaged in mortal combat. At first my opponent unfeigned my powers, but a wound which I gave him in the arm, seemed to convince him that victory would cost him an effort, and he became more wary. For several moments the conflict was only a rapid exchange of passes, during which our blades rattled and flashed incessantly; for neither of us could obtain the slightest advantage over the other. How the combatants progressed during this interval I neither knew nor cared to ascertain, for so intensely was I engrossed in my duel with the pirate-leader, that I heard nothing but the ringing of our blades, and saw only the glittering eye of my opponent. These only who have been engaged in a deadly strife can understand the feelings of one in such a situation. Every faculty is engrossed in the struggle — the very heart seems to stand still, awaiting the end. The mind involuntarily follows the impulse of the mind, and the eye never loses sight of its destined victim. The combat had continued for several minutes, when I saw that the pirate was beginning to grow chafed, for the calm, collected expression of his eye gave place gradually to one of fury, and his lunges were made with increasing rapidity, and with a daring amounting to rashness. It took all my skill to protect myself, and I was forced at length to give ground. The eye of the pirate glared at his success like that of a wild beast already sure of its prey, and, becoming even more venturesome, he pressed forward and made a pass at me which I avoided with difficulty, and then only partially, for the keen blade, although averted from my heart, glanced sideways, and penetrating my arm inflicted a fearful wound. But at the time I was insensible of the injury. I felt the wound no more than if a pin had pierced me. Every thought and feeling was engrossed by the now defenseless front of my antagonist, for, as he lunged forward with his blade he lost his defense, and his bosom lay unguarded before me. Quick as lightning I shortened my blade and prepared to plunge it into the heart of the pirate. He saw his error, and made an attempt to grasp it with his left hand — to ward off the blow with his sword-arm. But it was in vain. With one desperate effort I drove my blade forward — it cut through and through his half-posed defense — and with a dull, heavy sound, went to his very heart. His eyes glared an instant more wildly than ever — his lips opened, but the last cry was stilled ere it was half uttered — a quick, shuddering, convulsive movement passed over his face and through his frame, and, as I drew out the glittering blade, now red with the blood, I left one who, a moment before, had been in full existence, the prostrate back dead upon the deck. At the same instant I heard a hearty cheer, and looking around, I saw that our brave fellows had gained a footing on the deck, and were driving the prize backward toward the stern of the vessel. I now, for the first time, felt the pain of my wound. But hastily stretching the scarf from the body of my

opponent, I managed to bandage my arm so as partially to stop the blood, and hurried to head my gallant tars.

All this had not occupied three minutes, so rapid are the events of a mortal combat. I had at first thought that we had been forgotten in the excitement of the strife, but I had not been wholly unobserved, for as I stooped to snatch the scarf of the pirate, one of his followers who had seen him fall, leveled a pistol at me with a curse, but the missile was struck up by one of my men, just as it was discharged, and the ball lodged itself harmlessly in the bulwark beside me. In another instant I was again in the midst of the fight. The red scarf which I wore, however, reminding the pirates of the breath of their leader, called down on me their revenge, and my appearance in the strife was a signal for a general rush upon me.

"Down with him," roared a tall, swarthy assassin, who, from his tone of authority, I judged to be the second in command; "cut him down — revenge! revenge!"

I was at that moment surrounded on two sides by the pirates, but springing back while my gallant tars raised their blades in an arch over me, I escaped the cutlasses of the foe.

"Hark the hell-hounds to perdition," growled a veteran fore-topman, as he dashed at the piratical lieutenant.

"Stand fast, all — life or death — that for your vengeance," was the response of the foe as he leveled a pistol at the breast of the gallant seaman. The ball sped on its errand, and the topman fell at my feet.

My men were now infuriated beyond all control. They dashed forward, like a torrent, sweeping every thing before them. The pirates, headed by their leader, made one or two desperate efforts to maintain their ground, but the impetuosity of their antagonists was irresistible, and the desperadoes, at first sullenly giving way, at length were forced into an indiscriminate retreat. A few of the most daring of the freebooters, however, refused to yield an inch and were cut down; while others, after flying a few paces, turned and died at bay; but with the loss of immediate life trampled over the fear of an ultimate ignominious death, and they retreated to the fire-raft, down which they were driven. A few attempted to regain the long crack boat in which they had attacked the brig from the island, but their design was anticipated by one of our followers, who drove a brace of shot through her bottom.

I may forget one of the female whose shriek had first alarmed us all, alighting to the cabin, I descended with a tremor — I. At, six feet and yet fearing to learn the truth. I have faced death in a hundred forms — in storm, in battle, and amidst epidemics, but my nerves never trembled before or since as they did when I opened the door into the cabin. What a sight was there! Extended on the floor lay a white-haired old man, with a huge gash in his forehead, and his long silvery locks dibbled in his own gore. At his side, in a state of grief approaching to stupification, sat, or rather knelt, a lively young creature who might be about seventeen, her

long golden tresses disheveled on her snowy shoulders, and her blue eyes gazing with a dry, stony look upon the face of her dead parent. Both the daughter and the father were attired with an elegance which bespoke wealth if not rank. Around her were several female slaves, filling the cabin with their lamentations, and, at intervals, a negro entering to comfort their young mistress. Several books and a guitar were scattered about, and the whole apartment, though occupying the cabin of a common merchant-brig, had an air of familiar grace and beauty. The sight of the instruments of misery did not stop me at the tears into my eyes. Alas! little hei that lovely girl imagined, when singing her artless songs, in what misery another human would find her.

My entrance, however, partially aroused the desolate girl. She looked up with alarm in every feature, gazed at me irresolutely a moment, and then frantically clasping the body of her murdered parent, shrank from my approach. The negro women clattered round her, their lamentations stilled by their tears.

"You are free — thank God!" said I in a voice husky with emotion, "the murderers of your parent are avenged."

The terrified girl looked at me with an expression which I shall never forget — an expression in which agony, joy, and fear were all mingled together — and then, pressing the cold body of that dead man close to her bosom, she burst into a flood of tears; while her slaves, reassured by my words, resumed their noisy grief. I knew that the tears of the agonized daughter would relieve her grief, and respecting the sacredness of her sorrow, I withdrew to the deck.

Meantime, one of the crew of the brig who had managed to secrete himself from the pirates, and had thus escaped the massacre which befell indiscriminately his messmates, had come forth from his hiding-place, and related the story of their capture. I will give it, adding other matters in their place, as I learnt them subsequently from the inmates of the cabin. The brig was a coaster, and had left Havana a few days before, having for passengers an English gentleman of large fortune with his daughter and her personal slaves. They had been becalmed the preceding evening near the lee of the neighboring island, and, as the night was dark, the passengers had remained on deck until a late hour, the daughter of Mr. Neville amusing herself with singing to her own guitar. It was owing to the rafter, but yet delicate noise of her songs. At daybreak had descended to the cabin, but, within a few minutes after my return, a large cork boat, pulled by some twenty men, all negroes and natives, had been seen coming toward the brig. The gun was no use, and defence was useless. The pirates had a swivel gun, which was manned by the crew of a brig-sloop which had been captured. Mr. Neville had held the command, and, with his daughter and his possession of the gun, had retreated to the cabin, closing the entrance on the inside. But the pirates, headed by their leader, although baffled for a while, had eventually broken through the defense and poured into the cabin but not until several of their

number had been wounded by the desperate parent who, fighting like a lion at bay, had even fired through the door on his assailants after they had scattered it, and before it was finally broken in. At length the robbers had gained an entrance; and a dozen swords were leveled at Mr. Neville, who still endeavored to shield his daughter. He fell — and God knows what would have been the fate of that innocent girl, if we had not at the instant reached the brig. The ruffian leader was forced to leave his prey and hasten on deck. The reader knows the rest.

When morning dawned we were still abreast of the island. By this time, however, a light breeze had sprung up, and the schooner had been brought to under the quarter of The Arrow. My superior heard with emotion the death of his Lieutenant, and I expressed the determination of carrying the pirates into the neighboring port at once, and delivering them up for trial. He gave up his own child temporarily to the afflicted daughter, and sympathized with her sorrow, as if she had been his own child. The remains of her parent were not consigned to the deep, but allotted, on the following day, a place in consecrated ground. But I pass over the events immediately succeeding the capture of the pirates. Suffice it to say that, after a delay of three or four days in port, we found it would be impossible to have the pirates brought to trial by the tardy authorities under a mouth. As my presence was deemed necessary on that event, and as my superior was unwilling to delay his cruise for so long a period, it was determined then that The Arrow should pursue her voyage, calling again at the port to take me up in the course of a month or six weeks. The next day, after this arrangement, she sailed.

CHAPTER V.

THE EXPEDITION TO THE PIRATE'S STRONGHOLD.

It was a melancholy day when the body of the murdered Mr. Neville was buried in the burial-ground of the port of —; and if stricken with tears at his funeral, what must have been the emotion of his orphaned daughter! All that kindness could do, however, was done to alleviate her grief; her friends crowded around her to offer consolation; and even our hardy tars showed their sympathy for her by more than one act. It was a fortunate occurrence that she had a near relative in town, and in his family accordingly she took up her residence, where she could indulge her sorrow on the bosoms of those who were united to her by natural ties, and

could sympathize with her the more sincerely because they knew the worth of which she had been deprived. It is one of the wisest dispensations of Providence that our grief should be shared and, as it were, soothed by those we love.

The pirates had no sooner been committed to prison, than endeavours were made, on the part of the authorities, to ascertain the head-quarters of the gang; for its depredations had been carried on during the past year to an extent that left no doubt that the prisoners formed only a detachment of a larger body, which, dividing into different parties, preyed on the commerce of the surrounding islands from as many different points. Where the head-quarters of the pirates were held was, however, unknown; as every attempt to discover them, or even to capture any of the gang had hitherto proved abortive. The authorities were, therefore, anxious to get one or more of the prisoners to reveal the retreat of their messmates on a promise of pardon; but for some time their efforts were unavailing, as each prisoner knew, that if any of the gang escaped, the life of the traitor would not be worth a moment's purchase. At length, however, the temptations held out to two of the prisoners proved irresistible, and they revealed the secret which the governor-general was so anxious to know. The head-quarters of the pirates proved to be on a small island, some leagues north of the spot where we captured the pirates. The place was said to be admirably fortified by nature, and there was no doubt, from the prisoners' confession, that it had been called in to render the retreat impregnable.

The number of the pirates usually left behind to protect their head-quarters was said to amount to a considerable force. Notwithstanding these things, the governor-general resolved on sending a secret expedition to carry the place, and, if possible, make prisoners of the whole nest of freebooters. As, however, the spies of the gang were known to infest the town, it was necessary to carry on the preparations for the expedition with the utmost caution, so that no intelligence of the contemplated attack should reach the pirates to warn them of their danger. While, therefore, the authorities were apparently occupied with the approaching trial to the exclusion of every thing else, they were, in fact, secretly making the most active exertions to fit out an expedition for the purpose of breaking up the head-quarters of the gang. Several vessels were purchased, ostensibly for private purposes; and soldiers drafted into them to be ready at night. The vessels then left the harbor, cleared for various ports with the understanding, however, that they should all return to a single appointed day at a safe a few leagues distant from the retreat of the pirates. So absurdly was the plan managed, that the whole vessel composing the expedition, with the particular persons — called officers of government, who were not admitted to the secret, regarding them merely as common hire-hands — departing on their several voyages. In fact, had an attack been contemplated on a large scale, the preparations could not have been more secret or comprehensive. The almost incredible strength of the pirates had rendered such preparations, however, not only desirable but necessary.

THE EXPEDITION.

I was among the few admitted to the secret, for the governor-general did me the honor to consult me on several important particulars respecting the expedition. Tired of the life of inactivity I was leading, and anxious to see the end of the adventure, I offered to accompany the enterprise as a volunteer — an offer which his excellency gladly accepted.

We started in a trim little brig, disguised as a merchantman; but as soon as morning dawned, and we had gained an offing, we threw off our disguise, and presented an armament of six guns on a side, with a proportionable number of men. Our craft, indeed, was the greatest one belonging to the expedition, and all on board acquainted with her destination, were sanguine of success.

The wind proved favorable, and in less than forty-eight hours we took Capo del Istri, where the four vessels comprising the expedition were to rendezvous. As we approached the promontory, we discovered one after another of the little fleet, for as we had been the last to leave port, our consorts had naturally first reached the rendezvous, and in a few minutes we hove to in the center of the squadron, hoisting a signal for the respective captains to come aboard, to consult respecting the attack.

The den of the pirates was situated at the head of a narrow strait, commanding with a lagoon of some extent, formed by the waters of a river reflecting in the hollow of three hills, before they descended themselves into the sea. Across the mouth of this lagoon was moored the hull of a disabled ship, in such a position that her blocks completely concealed the entrance of the lake. Behind, the huts of the pirates' settlement stretched along the shore, while the various vessels of the freebooters lay anchored in different positions in the lagoon. Such, at least, was the appearance of the place when the pirates were not absent on their expeditions.

Our plan of attack was soon arranged. It was determined to divide our forces into two divisions, so that while one party should attack the pirates in front, the other should take a more circuitous path, and penetrating by land to the back of the settlement, take the enemy in the rear. As night was already closing in, it was determined to embark the latter party at once, so that it might proceed, under the guidance of one of the prisoners, to the position behind the enemy, and reach there, as near as possible, at the first dawn of day. It was arranged that the attack by water should commence an hour or two before day. By this means each party should reach its point of attack almost simultaneously. The onset, however, was to be first made from the water side, and the assault made in the rear of the foe was not to show itself until the fight had made some progress on our side.

The men destined for the land service were carefully mustered and set ashore, under the guidance of one of the prisoners. We watched their movements with anxiety, and they were lost to view, when we sought our bunks, as for a few hours' repose preparatory to what might be our last conflict.

The night was yet young, however, when we entered the mouth of the strait, and with a favorable breeze sailed along up toward the lagoon. The shallowness of the water in the channel had compelled us to leave our two larger craft behind and our forces were consequently crowded into the remaining vessels. Neither of them carried a broadside of weight sufficient to cope with that of the hind moored across the mouth of the lagoon.

As we advanced up the strait a deathlike stillness rested on the shadowy shores; and we had nearly reached the mouth of the lagoon before any sign betokened that the pirates were aware of our approach. We could just catch sight of the tall, rakish masts of a sloop over the low tree tops on the right, when a gun was heard in the direction of the lagoon, whether accidentally fired or not we could not tell. We listened attentively for a repetition of the sound; but it came not. Could it have been a careless discharge from our own friends in the rear of the foe, or was it a warning fire by one of the pirates' sentinels. Five or ten minutes elapsed, however, and all was silent. Meantime our vessels, with a wind free over the teakwood, were stealing almost noiselessly along the smooth surface of the strait; while the men lying close at their quarters, fully armed for the combat, breathlessly awaited the moment of attack, the tenseness of their excitement increasing as the period approached.

My own emotions I will not attempt to portray. We were already within a cable's length of the end of the strait, and in running into the lagoon, we would, if our approach had been detected, have to run the gauntlet of the broadside of the craft guarding this approach to the pirate's den — a broadside, which, if well delivered, would in all probability send us to the bottom. Our peril was therefore imminent. And the uncertainty whether our approach had been detected or not created a feeling of nervous suspense which increased our sensation of our peril.

"A minute more, and we shall shoot by the pirate," said I to the captain of our craft.

"Ay!" said he, "I have just passed the word for the men to lie down under the shelter of the bulwarks, so that if they open fire of musketry into us, we shall escape it as much as possible. Let us follow their example."

We stucked ourselves just forward of the wheel-house, so that as the vessel came around on the starboard tack, no living individual was left standing on the deck, except the helmsman. The next instant, leaving the shelter of the high bank, we swept into the lagoon, and saw the dark hull of the opposing vessel moored directly across our way.

Our suspense, however, was brought to a close. We had scarcely come abreast of the enemy's broadside when, as if by magic, her ports holes were all open, and as the blaze of the inferno of hell streamed across the night, her guns were run out, and instantaneously her fire was poured out from stem to stern in one continuous sheet of flame. Our midshipst went at once by the board, our hull

was fearfully cut up; and the shrieks of the wounded of our crew rose up in terrible discord as the roar of the broadside died away. But we still had heavily. Springing to his feet, the captain shouted to cut away the hawser that drizzled the marumast by our side. His orders were instantly obeyed. The schooner was once more headed for the hulk, and with a loud cheer our men sprung to their guns, while our consort behind opened her fire at the same time. Our light armament, however, was almost wholly ineficient. But happy we had not relied on it.

"Lay her aboard!" shouted the captain, "hoarders away!"

At the word, amid the fire of a renewed broadside, we dashed up to the tree, and running her astern just abaft of the marumast, poured our exasperated men like a torrent upon her decks. I was one of the first to mount her bulwarks. Attacked thus at their very guns, the pirates rallied desperately to the defence, and a furious combat ensued. I remember striking eagerly for a moment or two in the very thickest of the fight, and then feeling a sharp pain in my side, as a pistol went off beside me. I have a faint recollection of sinking to the deck, but after that all is a void.

CHAPTER VI.

THE CONFLICT AND VICTORY.

WHEN I recovered my senses, after the events narrated in the last chapter, I found that I was lying in the cabin of the schooner on board which I had been serving, while a group composed of the three surgeons and several officers of the expedition stood around me. As I opened my eyes and glanced around, scarce conscious as yet of the change that met my gaze, one of the medical men bent over me and said that my safety depended on my quiet. Gradually I imbibed the full meaning of his words, and called to mind the events immediately preceding my fall; but, in spite of his charge, I felt an uncontrollable desire to learn the extent of my injury. In a low whisper — so low indeed that I was startled at its faintness — I asked if I was seriously wounded, and whether we had conquered. But he smiled as he replied,

"Not now, at least not in full, for your weakness forbids it. But the danger is over. The ball has been extracted. Quiet is all you now require."

"But" said I again, "how of our expedition? Have we conquer-

"We have, but not a word more now. To morrow you shall hear

all. Gentlemen," he continued, turning to the group, " we had best withdraw now that our friend is past the crisis. He needs repose."

I felt the wisdom of this advice, for my brain was already whirling from the attempt to control my thoughts, even for the mere purpose of asking the questions necessary to satisfy my curiosity; so when the group left the cabin I sank back on my couch, and closing my eyes with a sense of relief, soon lost all recollection in a deep sleep, the effect, no doubt, of the opiate which had been administered to me.

When I awoke, the morning breeze was blowing freshly through the cabin, bringing with it the odors of thousands of aromatic plants from the shores of the neighboring islands, and as it wantered across my forehead, dallying with my hair and imparting a delicious coolness to the skin, I felt an invigorating, pleasurable sensation — a sensation of the most exquisite delight — such as no one can imagine who has not felt the cool breath of morning after an illness in the close cabin of a small schooner.

My curiosity to hear the events of the combat that occurred after my fall, would not suffer me to rest, and I gave my attendants no peace until I had learned the whole.

It will be recollectel that when I sunk to the deck in a state of insensibility, we were engaged in a warm contest with the pirated junk which had been moored across the mouth of the outlet from the lagoon. The fight was maintained for some time on board of the enemy, and at first with varying success; but the daring of our men at last overcame the desperate resistance of the pirates, and the enemy were either driven below, cut down, or forced overboard. The outwork, as it were, having thus been carried, we pushed on to the settlement itself, for the other vessels moored in the lagoon were by this time deserted, the pirates having retreated to a fortification on the shore, where their whole force could act together, and where they had entrenched themselves, as they valily imagined, in an impregnable position. But our brave fellows were not at all weak. Firing with success, and burning to revenge those of their comrades who had already fallen, they cried out to be led against the desperadoes. Sternly, under cover of the guns of our little boat, the men were landed, and, while a brisk fire was kept up from the vessels, the assault was made. At first the pirates stood manfully to their posts, pouring in a deadly and unrelenting fire on the assailants. In vain did the officers lead on their men three several times to the assault, for three several times were they driven back by the retarding fire of the now desperate pirates. To increase the peril of their situation, no sign of their compatriots in the rear had as yet appeared. The natives were already cheering in anticipation of a speedy victory, and our men, although still burning for vengeance, were beginning to lose all hope of victory, when the long-expected rocket, announcing the arrival of the other party, shot up from the deck of the fort in the rear of the fort, and instantaneously a crashing roar burst from the same quarter, followed by a long, loud cheer in which was no

ognized the battle-shout of our comrades. The sounds shivered to the very hearts of our almost dispirited men, and added new energy to their souls, and fresh vigor to their arms. Again they demanded to be led to the assault, and, with fixed bayonets, following their leader, they dashed up to the very embrasures of the fort. Then began a slaughter so terrific that the oldest veterans assured me they had never witnessed the like. Through an impervious veil of smoke, and plancing balls and rattling grape-shot, our gallant fellows swept over the plain, through the ditch, up the embankment, and into the very heart of the fortification. At the mouths of their guns they met the pirates, bearing them boldly backward at the point of the bayonet. But if the onslaught was determined the resistance was desperate. Every step we advanced was over the dead bodies of the savages. Tossing away their muskets they betook themselves to their pikes and cutlasses, and though forced to retreat by our overwhelming numbers, retreating sullenly, like a lion at bay, they marked their path with the blood of the assailants. Meanwhile the detachment of our troops in the rear, finding the defences in that quarter weaker than those in front, soon carried the intrenchments, and driving before it as well the immediate defenders of the walls, as the desperados who had hurried to reinforce them, it advanced with loud cheers to meet us in the center of the fortification. Hemmed in thus on every side, the pirates saw that further resistance was useless, and were seized with a sudden panic. Some threw down their arms and cried for quarter, others cast themselves in despair on our bayonets, while a few, managing to escape by cutting their way through a part of our line, took to the swamps in the rear of the fort, whither they did not pursue. In less than an hour from the first assault, not a pirate was left at large within the precincts of the settlement. The tents were given to the flames, and the hulk at the outlet of the lagoon, scuttled and sunk. The other vessels were manned by our own forces, and carried away as trophies. Thus was destroyed one of the most noted piratical havens since the days of the Buccaneers.

We learned from the prisoners that the approach of the expedition had been detected while it was yet an hour's sail from the settlement, and that preparations had instantly been made for our repulse. Had we not been under a misapprehension as to the strength of these desperados, and thus been induced to take with us more than double the force we should otherwise have employed, their efforts would not have been successful, since the almost impregnable nature of their defenses enabled them to withstand the assault as a force four times the number of their own. It was only the opportune arrival of our comrades, and the surprise which they elicited in their quarter of attack, that gave us the victory after all. As it was, our loss was terrible. We had extirpated this curse of society, but at what a price!

The wound which I had received was at first thought to be mortal, but after the extraction of the bullet my case assumed a more favorable aspect. The crisis of my fate was looked for with anxiety by my

comrades in arms. My return to consciousness found them, as I have described, watching that event at my bedside.

Our voyage was soon completed, and we entered the port of — amid the salvoes of the batteries, and the merry peals of the various convent bells. The governor came off to our fleet, almost before we had dropped our anchors, and bestowed rewards on the spot on those of his troops who had peculiarly distinguished themselves. He came at once to my cot, and would have carried me home to the government house, but Mr. Neville, the uncle of the fair girl whom I had saved from the desperadoes, having attended his excellency on board, insisted that I should accept the hospitalities of his home.

"Well," said his excellency, with a meaning smile, "I must give him up, for, as you say, mine is but a bachelor establishment, and hired nurses, however good, do not equal those who are actuated by gratitude. But I must insist that my own physician shall attend him."

I was still too weak to take any part in this controversy, and although I made at first a feeble objection to trespassing on Mr. Neville's kindness, he only smiled in reply, and I found myself, in less than an hour, borne to his residence, without having an opportunity to expostulate.

CHAPTER VII.

CONVALESCING AND BEING LOVED.

What a relief it is, when suffering with illness, to be transported from a close, dirty cabin to a large room and tidy accommodations! How soothing to a sick man are those thousand little conveniences and delicacies which only the hand of woman can supply, and from which the sufferer on shipboard is debarred! The well aired bed-linen; the clean and tidy apartment; the flowers placed on the stand opposite the bed; the green jalousies left half open to admit the cooling breeze; the delicious rose-water sprinkled around the room, and giving it an aromatic fragrance; and the orange, or tangerine, or other delicacy ever ready within reach to cool the fevered mouth, and remind you of the ceaseless care which thus anticipates your every want. All these, and even more, attested the kindness of my host's family. Yet every thing was done in so quiet, truculent a manner that, for a long while, I was ignorant to whom I was indebted for this care. I saw no one but the nurse, the physician, and Mr. and Mrs. Neville. But I could not help fancying that there were crew, who sometimes visited my sick chamber, although as yet I

had never been able to detect them, except by the fresh flowers which they left every morning as evidences of their presence. More often, on suddenly awaking from sleep, I fancied I heard a light singing, not far behind my bed, and once I distinguished the tone of a low, sweet voice, which sounded on my ear, like as it was of the grating accents of the muse, like music from Paradise. Often, too, I heard, through the half-open blinds that concealed the entrance to a neighboring room, the sounds of a harp accompanied by a female voice; and, at such times, keeping my eyes closed lest I should be too long awake, and the singer thus be induced to stop, I have listened and my soul seemed fairly "lapped in Elysium." The memory of that happy apartment, with its spotless curtains and completeness, and the wind blowing freely through its open jalousies, is as vivid in my memory today as it was in the hour when I lay there, listening to what seemed the seraphic music of that unseen performer. I hear yet that voice, so soft and yet so silvery, now ringing clear as the note of a lark, and now sinking into a melody as liquid as that of flowing water, yet ever, in all its variations, sweet, and full, and captivating. Such a voice I used to dream of in childhood as belonging to the angels in heaven. Our dreams are not always wrong!

At length I was sufficiently recruited in strength, to be able to sit up, and I shall ever remember the delicious emotions of the hour when I first took a seat by the casement and looked out into the garden, then fragrant with the dew of the early morning. I saw the blue sky shining overhead, I heard the low plashing of a fountain in front of my window, I inhaled the delicate perfume wafted to me by the refreshing breeze, and as I sat there, my soul ran over, as it were, with its exressing gladness, and I almost joined my voice, from very ecstasy, with that of the birds who hopped from twig to twig, caroling their morning songs. As I sat thus looking out, I heard a light footstep on the gravel walk without, and directly the light, airy form of a young girl emerged from a secluded walk of the garden, fall in my view. As she came opposite my window she looked up as if inadvertently, for, catching my eye, she blushed deeply and cast her gaze on the ground. In a moment, however, she recovered herself, and advanced in the direction she had been passing. The first glance at the face had revealed to me the countenance of her I had been instrumental in rescuing from the pirates. My apartment, like all those on the island, was on the ground floor, and when Miss Neville appeared she was already within a few feet of me. I rose and bowed, and noting that she held a bunch of newly gathered flowers in her hands, I said,

"It is your taste, then, Miss Neville, which has filled the vase in my room every morning with its flowers. You can not know how thankful I am. Ah! would that all knew with what delight a sick person gazes on flowers!"

She blushed again, and extended the bouquet to me, still with a smiling of gayety:

"I little thought you won't be up to-day, much less at so early an hour, or perhaps I might not have gathered your flowers. Since you can gaze on them from your window, they will be less attractive to you when severed, like these, from their parent stem."

"No — never," I answered, warmly; "indeed your undeserved kindness, and that of your uncle and aunt, I can never forget."

She looked at me in silence with her large, full eye, a moment ere she replied, and I could see that they grew humid as she gazed. Her voice, too, softened and sank almost to a whisper when at length she spoke.

"Undeserved kindness! And can we ever forget?" she said, "what we owe to you?"

The words, as well as the gentle tone of reproof in which they were spoken, embarrassed me for a moment, and my eyes fell beneath her gaze. As if unwilling further to trust her emotions, she turned hastily away as she finished. When I looked up, she was gone.

We met daily after this. The even of a convalescent night I look forward to the time she spent with me, as if it constituted my whole day. Certainly the room seemed less cheerful after her departure. Often would I read while she sat by me. At other times we indulged in conversation, and I found Miss Nevile's mind open on general subjects so extensive as sometimes to put me to task. She had read not only the best authors of our own language, but also those of France, and her remarks proved that she knew while she read. She was a passionate admirer of music, and but a finished performer. For all that was beautiful in nature she had an eye and soul. There was a dash of gaiety in her disposition, as though, perhaps, her general character was sanguine, and late events had if any thing increased its prominent trait. Her tenor voice, a gentle melancholy — if I may use the phrase — was peculiar to her choice of favorite songs. More than once, when listening to the simple ballads she delighted to sing, have I caught the tears rolling down my cheeks, so unconsciously had I been subdued by the power of her voice and song.

In a few days I was sufficiently convalescent to leave my room, and thenceforth I established myself in the one from which I had heard the mysterious music. This apartment proved to be a sort of boudoir appropriated to the use of Miss Nevile, and it was her performance on the harp that I had heard during my sickness. Hells, too, had been the figure which I had seen once or twice find a fit of sight on my awaking from a fevered sleep.

It is a dangerous thing when two young persons, of different sexes, are thrown together in daily intercourse, especially when one, like his very situation, is forced to depend on the other for the amusement of hours that would otherwise hang heavily on him. The peril is increased when either party is bound to the other by a number of fancied ties of gratitude. But during the first delirious fits of my convalescence, I was unconscious of this danger, and without knowing

any thought of the future, I gave myself wholly up to the enjoyment of the hour. For Miss Neville I soon came to entertain a warm sentiment of regard, yet my feelings for her were of a far different nature from those I entertained for Annette. I did not, however, stop to analyze them, for I saw, or thought I saw, that the pleasure

left in Libbie's society was mutual, and I inspired no further. Alas! it never entered into my thoughts to ask whether, while I contented myself with friendship, she might not be yielding to a stronger sentiment. Had I been more vain, perhaps this thought might have occurred to me. But I never imagined — I had felt that — was — that this constant intercourse betwixt us could endanger the peace of either. If I could, I would have ended my heart's trouble sooner than win the love which I could not return. Yet such was my destiny. My eyes were opened at length to the consequences of my indiscretion.

We had been conversing one day of the expected arrival of The Arrow, and I had spoken enthusiastically of my profession, and, perhaps, expressed some restlessness at the inactive life I was leading, when I noticed that Ellen sighed, looked more closely at her work, and remained silent for some time. At length I met her eyes, however, and said :

"How can you explain the passion which a seaman entertains for his ship? One would think that your hearts indulged in no other sentiment than this engrossing one."

"You wrong us, indeed, Ellen," I said, "for no one has a warmer heart than the sailor. But we have shared so many dangers with our ship, and it has been to us so long almost our only world, that we learn to entertain a sort of passion for it, which, I confess, seems a paradox to others, but which to us is perfectly natural. I have the old Arrow with a sentiment appropriate to me in mind, and yet I have many and dear friends whom I love more the less for this passion."

I saw that her bosom heaved quicker than usual at these words, and she plied her needle with increased velocity. Had I looked more narrowly, I might have seen the color faintly coming and going in her cheeks, and almost heard her heart beating in the silence of the room. But I still was blind to the cause of this emotion. By some unaccountable impulse, I was bold to speak of a subject which I had always avoided, though not intentionally - my early intimacy with Adelitte, and her subsequent rescue from the Duke. Scarcely, as I thought, of the sympathy of my listener, and carried away by my impulsive love for Adelitte, I dwelt on her story for some time, too long in consequence of the cold, my words were pricking on Helen. My fascination on that morning seems now incredible. As I became more expert with my subject, I noticed still less the growing agitation of my listener, and it was natural I was in the mind of a person whom I passed for weak to guess the goodness of Adelitte's character, that I saw that Helen was in tears. She was looking low over her work so as to conceal her agitation from my eye.

CHAPTER VIII

ELLEN SEVILLE — THE TRAGEDY OF DEATH.

It was a short six months after my departure from Mr. Neville's hospitable mansion, when we came to anchor again in the port, with a couple of rich prizes, which we had taken a short time before in the Gulf-Stream. The first intelligence I heard, on landing, was that Miss Neville was said to be dying of consumption. Need I say that a pang of keenest agony shot through my heart? As nothing whispered to me that I was the cause, at least partially, of all this. With a faltering tongue I inquired the particulars. They were soon told. I subsequently learned more, and shall conceal nothing.

From the day when I left —, the health of Ellen had begun gradually to droop. At first her friends noticed only that she was less gay than usual, and once or twice they chided jestingly to me as the secret of her loss of spirits. But when the expression of gaiety, which at such times would light across her face, was to cease, her friends ceased their allusions. Meanwhile her health began sensibly to be affected. She ate little. She slept in fitful dozes. No means could drive away the settled depression which seemed to brood upon her spirits. Her friends resorted to every thing to cheer her mind, but all was in vain. With a sad, sweet smile, she shook her head at their efforts, as if she felt that they could do nothing to reach her malady.

At length she caught a slight cold. She was of a northern constitution, and when this cold was followed by a recurrent cough, her friends trembled lest it forebode the presence of that disease which annually sweeps off its thousands of the beautiful and gay. Nor were they long in doubt. Their worst fears were realized. Consumption had fixed its iron clutch on her heart, and was already tugging at its life strings. The worm was gnawing at the core of the flower and the next rough blast would sweep it from the stem. As day by day passed, she drew nearer to the grave. Her eye grew unken, but an unnatural lustre gleamed from its depths — the hectic flush blazed on her cheek — and that dry, hoarse — yet, which tortures the consumptive, while it snaps each after clutch of life, hourly grew worse.

At an early period of Ellen's illness, Mrs. Neville, who had been to the orphan girl a second mother, divined the secret of her malady. She did not, however, urge her confidence on her charge

but Ellen soon saw that her aunt knew all. There was a meaning in her startled avowal of my name, which could not be mistaken. Ellen's heart was won by this delicacy, until, one day, she revealed every thing. Mrs. Neville pressed her to her bosom at the close of the confession, and, though nothing was said, Ellen felt that the heart of her second mother bled for her.

As death drew nearer, Ellen's thoughts became gradually free from this world. But she had still one earthly desire — she wished to see me before she died. Only to Mrs. Neville, however, was this desire confided, and even then without any expectation that it could be gratified. When, however, THE ARROW stopped so opportunely in — —, her petitions became so urgent, that Mrs. Neville sent for me. With a sad heart I obeyed her summons.

"The dear girl," she said, when she met me in the anteroom, "would not be denied, and, indeed, I had not the heart to refuse her. Oh! Mr. Cavenish, you will find her sadly changed. These are fearful trials which God, in his good providence, has called us to undergo," and tears choked her farther utterance. I was scarcely less affected.

It would be a fruitless task in me to attempt to describe my emotions on entering the chamber of the dying girl. I have no recollection of the furniture of the room, save that it was distinguished by the exquisite neatness and taste which always characterized Ellen. My eyes rested only on one object — the sufferer herself.

She was reclining on a sofa, her head propped up with pillows, and her right hand lying listlessly on the snowy counterpane. How transparent that hand seemed with the blue veins so distinctly seen through the skin, that you could almost mark the pulsation of the blood beneath! But it was her countenance which most startled me. When I first saw her — save at that one parting interview — her smile had always sufficed with a sunniness that spoke the joy of a young and happy heart. Now the wild heat of consumption blazed on her cheek, and her eyes had a brilliancy and lustre that were not of earth. Then, her rich, golden tresses floated in wavy curls across her shoulders — now, that beautiful hair was gathered up under the close-fitting cap which she wore. Then her face was bright with the glow of health — alas! now it was pale and attenuated. But in place of her faded loveliness had come a more glorious beauty; and the glad smile of old had given way to one of seraphic sweetness. When she opened her wan hand toward me, and spoke in that unrivaled tone which, though feeble, was like the symphony of an Aeolian harp, it seemed, to my excited fancy, as if an angel from heaven had withdrawn to her side.

"This is a sad meeting," she said; for my emotions, at the sight of her changed aspect, would not permit me to speak — "but why grieve? It is all for the best. It might seem unkindly to some," she concluded, with a partial hesitation, while, if possible, a brighter glow depended on her cheek, "for me thus to send for you; but

I trust we know each other's hearts, and this is no time to bow to the formalities of life. I feel that I am dying."

"Say not so, dear Ellen," I gasped, while my frame shrank with agony at the ruin I had brought about, "oh! say not so. You will yet recover. God has many happy years in store for you."

"No, no," she said, touchingly, "this world is not for me; I am but a poor bruised reed — it were better I were cast aside. But weep not, for oh! I meant not to upbraid you. No, never, even in my first agony, have I blamed you — and it was to tell you this that I prayed I might survive. Yes! dearest — for it can not be wrong now to confess my love — I would not that you should remember me even in thought. You saved my life — and I loved you better than I knew it myself. You weep — I know you do not despise me — had we met under better auspices, the result might have been —" Here her voice cracked with emotion — "might have been different." I could only press her hand. "Oh! this is bliss," she murmured, after a pause. "But it was not so to be," she added, in a low voice, with a saddened tone, which cut me to the heart. "I should like to see her of whom you speak — she is very beautiful is she not? In heaven the angels are all beautiful." Her mind wandered. I have heard their music for days, and every day it is clearer and louder. Hear!" and with her finger raised, her eye fixed on the air, and a wrapt smile on her radiant countenance, she remained a moment silent.

Tears fell from us like rain. But by-and-bye her winking senses returned, and a look of unutterable woe passed over her face. Oh! how my heart bled! I knew not what I said; I only knew that I strove to soothe the dying moments of that sweet saint, so suffering, yet so forgiving. A look of happiness once more brightened up her face, and with a sweet smile, she talked of happiness in heaven. As we thus communed, our hearts were mated. Gradually her voice assumed a different tone, becoming sweeter and more liquid at every word, while her eyes shone no longer with that timid buster, but beamed on me the full fulgence of her soul's entire life.

"Raise me up," she said. I passed my arm around her, and gently lifted her up. Her head reposed on my shoulder, while her hand was still clasped in mine. She turned her blue eyes on me with a seraphic expression, such as only the sainted soul in its parting moment can embody, and whispered:

"Oh! to die thus is sweet! Henry, dear Henry — God bless you! In heaven there is no sorrow," and then, in inchoate sentences, she murmured of bright faces, and strange scenes, and various visions that were in the air. The dying muse can tell that then knew more of God and nature than he ever knew before, and it may be that, as the soul leaves the body, we are gifted with a power to see things of which no mortal here can tell. What are? In our dying hour we shall learn.

The grave of Ellen is now forgotten by all, save me. The grass has grown over it for long years. But often, in the sad walks of

the night, I think I hear a celestial voice whispering in my ear; and, sometimes, in my dreams, I behold a face looking, as it were, toward the stars; and that face, all glorious in light, is as the face of that sated girl. I can not believe that the dead return no more.

CHAPTER IX.

THE PRIVATEER.

I REMAINED but a short time in The Arrow after we sailed finally from the port of —; for happening to fall in with and capture a richly-laden sloop, Captain Slaythe resolved to arm and send her forth to cruise against the enemy on her own account. Along T. A. was carefully mounted on a pivot amidships, a compliment of men placed in her, and the command given to our second Lieutenant, with myself for subordinate. Thus equipped, we putted away from our port, who bore away for the north, while we were to sail in the Wabash and Passage.

For several days we sail'd with no adventure. The weather was intensely sultry. He who has never witnessed a noon-tide cabin at sea can have no idea of the stifling heat of such a situation. The sun is like molten brass; no breath of air is stirring; the atmosphere is dry and parched in the mouth, and the heavens hang over an utter canopy of bluish fire, in the very center of which a blaze with intense brilliancy the midday sun. The decks, the cabin, and the tops are like scalding. The awnings may indeed afford a partial shelter from the vertical rays of the sun, but no man can be well down the center windlass; while, whenever a sailor stands to the leeward, the air that opens in the canvas, the heat comes out and it is in the heat, and the planks become as hot as to the touch as if a furnace were beneath them.

It was on one of the hottest days of the season, and I afloat at midnight when we parted from The Arrow, that we lay this broadside. The sun was high noon. I stood waiting for breath by the weather mainmast, dressed in a thin jacket, and without a cravat, for as my jacket was to be thrown to the sea, if possible, a last, or a first, effort to be made at saving my life. My watch was in view. The sun had not yet risen the day, but a long time previous unlighted he had the surface of the water, which glistered far and near like a mirror, which the sun is reflected vertically, pointing and almost touching the gun. The sloop lay motionless on the ocean, the shadow of her boom shivering in the wave, as the swell undulated

along. Silence reigned on the decks. To a spectator at a distance, who could have beheld our motionless shadow in the water, we would have seemed an enchanted ship, hanging midway between the sea and sky.

Noon passed, and the afternoon drew heavily along, yet still no breeze arose to gladden our listless spirits. Two hours struck, and then three, but the same monotony continued. Wearily I sat at length I was about turning from the weather quarter to go below, when I fancied I saw a sail far down on the horizon. I paused and looked intently in the direction where the vague sight had been visible. For a moment the glare of the sun and the water prevented from distinguishing with any accuracy whether what I saw was really a sail or not, but at length my doubts were removed by the cry of the lookout on the forecastle, and before half an hour it was evident that the vessel to windward was a square-rigged craft, but of what size or character it was impossible to determine.

"They must have had a puff of wind up yonder," remarked the second lieutenant to me, "or else they could not have come within sight so rapidly."

"But the breeze has left them ere this," I said, "for they have not moved for the last quarter of an hour."

"We shall probably know nothing more of them until nightfall, for the wind will scarcely make before sunset, even if it does blow. He has the weather-gage. Until I know something more of him I would rather change positions."

"He is some fat merchantman," I replied, "we will rig to his plenteous pocket before morning."

During the afternoon the calm continued, our craft and the stranger still occupying their relative positions. Meantime, however, were the conjectures which we hazarded as to the character of our neighbor; and again and again were our glasses put to our eyes to see if any thing could be discovered to lead to any conjectures. But the royals of a ship, when nothing else of her is seen, give scarcely any clue as to her character; and a quarter of an hour passed away, and we were still altogether ignorant respecting the size and strength of our neighbor. To add to our anxiety, however, signs of a coming breeze began to appear on the horizon, and when the luminous wheel of the sun descended below the horizon, the ship to windward was perceptibly moving to leeward.

"Ah! there it comes at last—" said the second lieutenant, "and, by my halidom, the stranger is starting from us. Now, if he will only keep in his present mind and we can get within range of him, I am no officer of the United Colonies if I don't give him a hot work. By St. George, the men have had a long day's work, and they long so eagerly to what their pay is, that I would venture to attack almost twice our force—oh! I am mad! You know such a low-level brush with the French is bad, and I suppose you think no certain enemy is worth a thought."

"Not altogether," said I, "but I think we shall have our men

graffield. Yonder chap is certainly twice our size, and he carries his broadsides justly as a man-of-war."

" Faith! and you're right, Harry," said my old messmate, as he shot the glass with a jerk, after having, in consequence of my last remark, taken a long look at the stranger; " that's no sleepy boatman to wake a barge. But we'll swing her up to him, nevertheless; and I don't like to run away from the first ship he meets."

I did not know then when I thought of the excuses with which the lieutenant was endeavoring to justify to himself his contemptible conduct on a craft that was not only more than twice our size, but a heavy gunned cruiser, for I knew the case would have been the same if this had been the *Hambleton*, instead of the first vessel he had met after assuming a separate command, as no man in the crew had been more notorious for the recklessness with which he incurred danger. Perhaps this was the fault of his character. I really believe he would, if dared to it, have run into Ports mouth itself, and fired on the British fleet at anchor. In our former day, when we had been fellow-sailors on board *The Arrow*, we had often discussed this trait in his character, and perhaps now he felt called on, from a consciousness of my opinion, to make some excuse to me for his disregard of prudence in approaching the stranger; for, as soon as the breeze had made, he had close-hauled the schooner, and, during the conversation I have recorded, we were dashing rapidly up towards the approaching ship.

As we drew nearer to the stranger, my worst suspicions became realized. Her ensign hoisted up large and clear as, and directly her long black jib-booms appeared, and then her parts opened to our view, six on a side; white, almost simultaneously with a discharge of her fore, a roll of bursting shot up to her gaff, and, marlins, displayed the cross of St. George. There was now no escape. The enemy had the weather-gage, and was almost within coaling distance. If we or probably a more wary approach might have been hitherto, there was no longer any room for the exercise of exertion. It would be impossible for us now to avoid combat, or get to windward by any means; yet, and to have attempted to escape by going off before the shot would have been matched, since of all points of sailing that was the worst for our broadside. Glancing, therefore, as the prospect appeared to us, there was no hesitation, but each man, as the drum beat us to quarters, hurried to his post with as much alacrity as if we were about to engage an inferior force, instead of one several times our superior.

We were in battle this time, and was early sailing on, fatigued with the night, shooting the deep with her gentle reliance, and with a jagged line of sparkles on every bight of water that reflected upon her broadside. Everywhere effects were discerned as in the last darkness as under the noonday sun. The breeze kept us all our riding with a joyous smile, singularly pleasing after the comparative toil of the day; and the waves that passed beneath our cat-water rolled glittering astern along our sides,

while ever and aften some billow, larger than its fellow, broke over the bow, sending its foam crackling back to the forecastle. At mid-deck our men were gathered, each one beside his allotted gun, silently awaiting the moment of attack. The cutlasses had been scut out; the boarding-pikes and cut-sets were placed close at hand for use; the balls had already been brought on deck, and were dry. We waited for some demonstration on the part of the foe to open our magazine and commence the combat in earnest. At length, when we were rapidly closing with him, the enemy yawned, and a single shot whistled high over us.

"Too hasty, by far, old jockeypies," said the captain of our long-Ten, "we'll pepper you after a different fashion when it comes to action to serve out the iron potatoes. All the surprise there is in being shot," he continued, as Mr. Vinton ordered the old veteran to charge his favorite piece; "we'll soon see who can play the most tickling the best, my hearty. Bowse away, boys, what d'ye think?"

— now we have her in a line — a little lower, just a trifle lower — that's it — there she goes; " and as he applied the match, the flame leaped from the mouth of the gun, a sharp, quick report followed, and the smoke, clinging a moment around the piece in a whirling column, broke into fragments and eddied away to leeward. On the gun, with the old veteran, stepping hasty aside, placed his hand over his eyes, and gazed after the shot, with an expression of intense anxiety stamped on every feature of his face. Directly an exclamation broke over his countenance, as the foretop-gall of the ship — the ball having hit the yard.

"By the holy and true cross," said a mercurial Irishman of the old veteran's crew, "but he has it there — hoorah! Give it to him hotly again — it's the early thrush that cat-bes the early wren."

"Hold with the ball to're, my hearties," sang out the old veteran, "she is yawning to let drive at us — there it comes. Give it as good as she sends."

The enemy was still, however, at too great a distance to be of much fire dangerous, and after a third shot had been exchanged between us — for the stranger appeared to have, like ourselves, but a single gun of any weight — this distant and uncertain fire was discontinued. Each craft drew steadily toward each other, determined to fight the combat as a gallant combat should be fought, — you know, to your harm.

The wind had now freshened considerably, and we made our way through the water at the rate of six knots an hour. This soon brought us on the bow of the foe. Our guns, however, had been hasty spared from the start, and to the last had scarcely been used. A moment's rest could be brought to bear upon our guns. As we drew up toward the enemy a general shout went up on the deck — each man, who stood at his gun, watching her with a keen interest. We could see that her decks were thick with men, and that marksmen had been posted in the tops to keep a sharp lookout. But no eye quailed, no nerve flattered, as we looked on this fierce

all array. We felt that nothing was left but to fight, since flight was at once dishonorable and impossible.

At length we were within pistol shot of the foe, and drawing closer to his bows. The critical moment had come. That instant I felt the weight which even a brave man will feel when about engaging in a duel to the death, shot through our frames as we saw that our bowsprit was impaling the stern of the enemy, and knew that in another instant our ship would perhaps be in another world. But there was but little time for such reflections now. The two vessels, each going on a different tack, rapidly shot by each other, and, in less time than I have taken to describe it, we lay broadside to broadside, with our bows on the stern of the foe, and our taffrail opposite his forecastle. But not a word had been spoken on board either ship; but the moment the command to fire was passed from gun to gun, a shout of rage instantaneously rolled along our sides, making our hearts all quiver in every timber. The rattling of timbers, the crack of guns, and the shrieks of the wounded, heard over even the roar of battle, told us that the iron missiles had sped home, bearing destruction with them. A momentary pause ensued, as if the crew of the enemy had been thrown into a temporary disorder — and then came in return the broadside of the foe. Our men had lain flat on the deck after our discharge, since our low bulwarks afforded scarcely any protection against the fire of the enemy, and when, therefore, his broadside came hurling upon us, the number of our wounded was far less than under other circumstances would have been possible.

"Thank God! the first broadside is over," I involuntarily exclaimed, "and we have the best of it."

"All that we'll whip him yet, my hearties," shouted the captain of our broadside; "give it to him with a will now — pepper his s——p with him. O, i Marldhead, after all, against the world!"

"Out with her — ay! there she has it," shouted a grim veteran in the forecastle; "I own with the rest of ye Britisher."

"Down with St. George," came hoarsely back in reply, as the roar of the enemy died in the air, and, at the words, a ball whizzed over my shoulder, and striking a poor fellow behind me on the neck, cut him clean off at the shoulders, and while it bore the scull with it into the deck, the headless trunk spouting its blood, as if from the jet of a volcano, over the decks. I turned away sickened from the sight. The last gasp of the mangled man saw the hand's sight, and his broadside, though the terrible energy with which they were discharged, told the horrors of their recent and terrible. What the broadside does in passing; for as the said broadside had passed, I may be on the decks of the enemy, I saw the massive dismount the gun which had fired the last deadly shot, scattering the fragments hither and thither, while the appalling shrieks which followed the explosion told that more than one of the foe had suffered by that fatal ball.

"We've revenge, poor Jack, my lads," said the captain of the

gun,—“away with her again. A few more such shots and the day's our own.”

The guns on either side were plied with fearful rapidity and precision. Our craft was beginning to be dreadfully cut up; we had received a shot in the foremast that threatened imminent danger; it was being cut down, and at every discharge of the enemy's guns one or more of our little crew fell wounded at his post. But if we suffered so severely it was evident that we had our revenge on the foe. Already his mizzen-mast had gone by the board, and two of his guns were dismounted. I fancied once or twice that his fire slackened, but the dense canopy of smoke that shrouded his decks and hung on the face of the water prevented me from observing, with any certainty, the full extent of the damage we had done to the enemy.

For some minutes longer the conflict continued with undimmed vigor on the part of our crew; but at the end of that period, the fire of the Englishman sensibly slackened. I could scarcely believe that our success had been so decisive, but, in a few minutes later, the guns of the enemy were altogether silenced, and dare I say it? And a voice hailed from him, saying that he had surrendered. The announcement was met by a loud cheer from our brave lads, and, as the two vessels had now fallen a considerable distance apart, the second lieutenant determined to send a boat on board to take possession. Accordingly, with a crew of about a dozen men, I proceeded from the sides of our battered craft.

As we drew out of the smoke of the battle we began to see the real extent of the damage we had done. The ship of the enemy lay an almost perfect wreck on the water, her foremast and mizzen-mast having both fallen over her side; while her hull was pockmarked in a continuous line, just above water-mark, with our balls. Here and there her bulwarks had been driven in, and her whole appearance betokened the accuracy of our aim. I turned to look at the schooner. She was scarcely in a better condition, for the foremast had by this time given way, and her whole broad side was pockmarked with the enemy's shot. A dark red streak was running out from her superiors, just abaft the mainmast. Alas! I well knew how terribly had been the slaughter in that part of her deck. I turned my eyes from the melancholy spectacle, and looked up to the star-bright sailing in the clear azure sky far overhead. The pale countenance of the planet seemed to speak a language of misery, of woes of man. A moment afterward we pulled alongside the battered ship.

As I stepped on deck I noticed that it was suddenly and almost dark to be seen. The whole crew had apparently withdrawn. At this instant, however, a hand appeared above the deck, and instantly vanished. I was not long in conjecturing that it was this strange conduct, for, almost immediately a second hand raised up the helmsman, and alighting towards the deck, surrendered. I saw at once the fisher-like straitness of the man, maimed by the fury of the enemy, limping back a few steps to

my men, and rallying them around me, bid the foe come on. They rushed instantly upon us, and in a moment we were engaged in a desperate *melee* as ever I had seen.

"Stand fast, my brave lads," I cried, "give not an inch to the cowardly and perfidious villains."

"I will stand and sweep them from the decks," cried the leader of the crew, stung by the taunt of cover lee.

A rascally desperado at the works made a blow at me with his cutlass, but hastily warbling it off I snatched a pistol from my belt, and fired at my antagonist, who fell dead to the deck. The next instant the crew became general. Men to man, and foot to foot, we fought, I veritably covering every inch of deck, each party being conscious that the struggle was one of life or death. The clashing of cutlasses, the crack of fire-arms, the oaths, the shouts, the brayings, the shrieks of the wounded, and the dull heavy fall of the dead on the deck, were the only sounds of which we were conscious but of that terribly noble, and these came to our ears not in their natural distinctness, but mangled into one fearful and indescribable uproar. For joyously, I scarcely heard the tumult. My whole being was occupied in defending myself against an here alien冒險家 who seemed to have singled me out from my crew, and whom it required but my hand at my weapon to keep at bay. I saw nothing but the scabbard of my scimitar; I heard only the crack rattles of cutlasses. I have said once before that my proficiency at my weapon had passed into a proverb with my messmates, and had I not been so in a master of my art, I should, on the present occasion, have fallen a victim to my antagonist. As it was, I received a sharp wound in the arm, and was so hotly pressed by my vigorous foe that I was forced to give way. But this temporary triumph proved the destruction of my antagonist. Flashed with success, he forgot his weapons, and made a lunge at me which left him unprovided. I moved quickly aside, and, seizing my advantage, had buried my scabbard in his heart before his own sword had lost the impetus given to it by his arm. As I drew out the recking blade, I became aware, for the first time, of the will-taught of sullen savagery. A hasty glance told me that we barely maintained our ground, while scores of my tribe fell sprawling on the deck wounded or dying. But before I could see whether the ranks of the foe had been entirely broken, and while yet scarcely an instant had passed since the fall of my antagonist, a loud, clear huzzza, sweeping over the deck of the ship, rose at my side, and, turning quickly around, I saw that my crew had the shout proceeded from a dozen of our foes who had been slain at that instant in a bout from the scimitar. In an instant they were on deck.

"Down with the traitors — no quarter — hew them to the deck!" said their chief, great messmates as they dashed on the resolute. But to my crew did not wait to try the issue of the combat. Dashed with such a fury, they did not fire twice, a few jumping over board, but most of them turning and laying down the hatchways

We were now masters of the deck. As I instantly guessed, the report of the firearms had been heard on board the schooner, when, suspecting foul play, a boat had instantly pushed off to our rescue.

"Your arrival was most opportune," said I, "a few minutes later and it would have been of no avail." And then, as I ran my eye over our comparatively gigantic foe, I could not restrain the remark: "It is a wonder to me how we conquered."

"Faith, and you may well say that," laughingly rejoined my mate; "it will be something to talk of hereafter. But the scoundrel hasn't come off," he added, glancing at our craft, "without the marks of this fellow's teeth. But I had forgot to ask who or what the rascal is."

The prize proved to be a privateer. She had received so many shots in her hull, and was already leaking so fast, that we concluded to remove the prisoners and blow her up. Her crew were accordingly ordered one by one on deck, handcuffed, and transported to the schooner. Then I laid a train, lighted it and put off from the prize. Before I reached our craft — which by this time had been removed to some distance — the ship blew up.

We rigged a jury-mast, and by its aid reached Charleston, where we tarried. Our capture gave us no little reputation, and while we remained in port we were lionized to our hearts' content.

Later, however, to continue the career so gloriously begun, we staid at Charleston no longer than was absolutely necessary to repair our damages. In less than a fortnight we left the harbor, and made sail again for the south.

CHAPTER X

THE LEE SHORE.

"All hands ahoy!" rang through the ship, as the shrill whistle of the boatswain awoke me from a pleasant dream. I started, hastily, threw on my monkey-jacket, and in a minute was on deck.

The winter sun had set clear, without a cloud to check the heavens, and when I went below at midnight, leaving the starboard watch in possession of the deck, the cold, bright stars were out, twinkling in the frosty sky; while a capful of wind was sending us merrily along. Six bells had just struck as I sprang up the gangway, and the moon was still clear above, bat, casting my eye hurriedly around, I saw a bank of mist, close on the starboard bow, driving rapidly from us, and covering sea and sky in that quarter, in a shadowy veil. The men were already at their posts, and as my watch came tumbling on deck

each member of it spring to all his messmates, so that in less time than I have taken to describe it, we had got the light sails in, and kept away the schooner a few points, and were ready to let every thing go by the ran, if necessary, as soon as the squall struck us. Nor did we wait long for the uninvited visitor. Scarcely had our craft been made snug before the squall burst on us in a whirling of snow, hail, rain, and sleet, against whence lay it was, for the moment, impossible to stand. As the gale struck the schooner, she heeled over until her decks were scarcely inclined, while the timbers bent like rushes in the tempest, and the spars strained and cracked as if they were bound to the torture. For a moment I thought that all was over, and, fearing a reef, I made ready to spring to windward as soon as she should capsize; but after a second of breathless uncertainty she sprang right over, cleared, and dashed forward as if she had been shot like an arrow from the bow, her whole forward part buried in the foam that belched around her bows, and flew high up the masts in showers. All this time the wind was shrieking through the hoppers with an intonation like that of a tortured fiend; while the hail and snow driving horizontally against the men fairly pinned them to their stations. The ropes soon became coated with ice, while the cold grew intense, so that it was with difficulty we could get the fore and main sails hoisted. At length, however, we stripped her to the right, when she stood nearly level, bearing gallantly up against the gale. Meantime, the snow fell thick and fast, covering the decks with its white carpeting, and dressing the shrubs, bushes, and the weather side of the masts in the garments of the grave.

"Blow! what a blarney! Old Davy himself has left hold of the bellows to-night," said the captain of the starboard watch, stooping before the gale and turning his back to windward; "why it blows as if it would blow the little craft away, like a feather, before it. By the g—d, but that bucket full of hail that has just rattled on my shoulders was enough to have felled an ox. It must be as brack as the eye of a gull to windward — bark! how the infernal sheet sings in the rigging!"

"How fast was the squall coming up?" said I as soon as the roar of the elements suffered me to speak, for it was only in the cessation and pauses in the gale, that I could hope to be heard.

"It came up like a pot in a woman — one moment her face is all smiles, the next like a thunder-clou'd. When the bell is struck, the sky was as clear as a kitten's eye, and now you can't see a fathom over the starboard bow; while we are driving along here like a chip in a mill-race, or a land-bird caught by a nor'wester. Whistle, whistle — howl, howl, why it blows as if the devil himself was working the bellows up to windward."

I could not help smiling at my messmate's energy, and as he dozed I looked thoughtlessly over the starboard quarter when a wild dash of sheet right in my face, stinging as if ten thousand nettles had struck me, forced me to turn my back on the storm more rapidly than I had faced it.

"It is as sharp as a razor," I ejaculated, when I recovered my breath, "cuts to the bone. But let me see, Mr. Merrivale," said I, approaching the binnacle, "this squall must be from the northeast. Ay! not a point either way. It's a lucky thing we have a good wind. I wouldn't be on the coast now for a year's pay."

"It would be an ugly berth," said Merrivale, shaking the sleet from his hair, "I've no notion of being jammed up like a rat in a corner, with a lee shore on one side, and a wind blowing great guns on the other, while one's only chance is to hug the gale under a cowl of canvas that threatens to snap your masts off as I could a pipe-stem. No, thank God! we're far at sea!"

The words had scarcely left his mouth, and I was as yet unable to answer, when a strange, booming sound, over the larboard bow, booted on my ear, thrilling through every nerve; while at the same instant, the look out shouted, in sharp, quick tones,

"Breakers ahead!"

For an instant there was an ominous silence, while even the tempest seemed to die momently away. No one who has not heard that fearful cry on a lee shore, when surrounded by darkness, can have any notion of our feelings. Each man held his breath, and turned his ear anxiously to leeward. In that awful second what varied emotions rushed through our minds, as we heard, rising distinctly over the partial hush of tempest, the hoarse roar of the surf, apparently close under our lee.

"Port — a-port — jam her close to the wind," almost shrieked Merrivale, the energy of his character, in the moment of peril, divesting him of his usual prolixity.

"Port it is," answered the man at the helm, as the sheets came rattling in and the schooner flew to windward, shivering the opposing wave to atoms, and sending the foam crackling in showers over the forecastle. As she answered to her helm, we caught sight, through the shadowy tempest, of the white breakers boiling under our lee; and an ejaculation of heartfelt gratitude broke involuntarily from my lips, when, a moment after, I saw the ghastly line of them glancing astern.

"Thank God!" echoed Merrivale; "another instant of delay and we should have struck. But how could we have made such a mistake in our reckoning? Where are we?"

"We are off the Jersey coast, somewhere between Egg Harbor and Barnegat," I answered, "but I thought we were at least twenty leagues at sea. How gallantly the old craft staggers to windward — she will yet weather the danger."

The exertions of the schooner were indeed noble. With her nose close down to the tempest, and her masts bending before the fierce hurricane that whistled along her canvas, she threshed her way to windward, now doggedly cleaving up an opposing bow-wave, and now thumping through the head sea, scattering the foam on either side her path, her timbers quivering and groaning in the desperate encounter. One moment the parted wave whizzed along the side

glittering with spectral brilliancy; and again, the wild spray went hissing by in the air, drenching the decks with water. Now, a huge bilow striking on her bows, with the force of a dozen forge-hammers, staggered her momentarily in her course; and now, shaking the water proudly from her, she addressed herself again to her task and struggled up the wave. Thus battling against sea, storm, and hurricane she held on her way, like a strong man fighting through a host.

Every officer as well as man was now on deck, and each one, fully sensible of our danger, watched, with eager eyes through the gloom to distinguish whether we gained ground in our desperate encounter. For an instant, perhaps, as the darkness hid the breakers from sight, or their roar came fainter to the ear in the increasing fury of the gale, we would fancy that our distance from the surf was slowly increasing, but as often, when the gale lulled, or the darkness on our lee broke partially away, our hearts sank within us at the conviction that our peril still continued as imminent as ever, and that the straggle of our gallant craft had been in vain. Meantime, the hurricane grew wilder and fiercer, and at length we saw that we were losing ground. The schooner still battled with a spirit as undimmed as before against her combined enemies, but she labored more and more at every opposing wave, as if fast wearing out in the conflict.

"We must crawl the canvas on her," said the skipper, after a long and anxious gaze on the shore under the lee; "if we strike out here, and be at least from land, we shall all be lost. Better, then, jump the mast out of her in clawing off?"

The master was accordingly given to take a reef out of the fore and main sail, and, after a desperate struggle with the canvas, the men succeeded in executing their duty. When our craft felt the increased sail, she started nervously forward, burying herself so deeply in the lee, I saw that I feared she would never emerge, while every iron, shroud, and timber in her cracked in the strain. At length, however, she rose from the surge, and rolled heavily to windward, casting off from her the tons of water that had pressed on her bows until every thing forward in the deluge. With another portentous clack, and another desperate, but successful struggle, we treated more freely. Yet there still came to our ears the sullen roar of the breakers on our lee, warning us that peril was yet imminent.

"Hark!" suddenly said Merrivale, "surely I hear a cannon. There is some craft nigh, even more dangerously situated than our wives."

"And there goes the flash!" I exclaimed, pointing ahead, whilst simultaneously the boom of a signal-gun rose on the night. "God help them, they are driving on the breakers," I added, as another gun lit up, for a moment, the scene before us, revealing a dismasted ship flying wilfully before the tempest.

"They are whirling down to us with the speed of a racer — we shall strike!" ejaculated Merrivale.

As he spoke, the shalowy ship emerged from the tempest of snow and sleet, not a pistol-shot from our bow. Never shall I forget the appearance of that spectral craft. She had no mast remaining, except the stump of the mizzen. From her size we knew her to be a ship-of-war. So far as we could see through the obscurity, her decks were crowded with human beings, some apparently stupified, some in the attitude of supplication, and some giving way to uncontrollable frenzy. As all power over her had been lost, she was sailing directly before the tempest. The time that was consumed in these observations occupied but an instant, for the darkness of the storm was so dense that the eye could not penetrate the gloom more than a few fathoms; and a period scarcely sufficent for a breath elapsed from the first discovery of the ship before we saw that in another instant she would come in contact with us. Already she was in fearful proximity to our bows. The danger was perceived by us and by the crew of the dismantled ship at the same instant, and a wild cry rose up which drowned even the frizzled tempest. Escape seemed impossible. We were between two dangers, to one of which we must fall a prey. Our only chance of avoiding the breakers was to keep our craft close to the wind, while, by so doing, a collision appeared inevitable. Yet a single chance remained.

"Jam her up!" shouted the skipper, catching at the only hope; "ay! hard down till she shivers."

We held our breath for the second that ensued. So close had the ship approached, that I could have pitched a biscuit on her decks. Her bowsprit already threatened to come into collision with our bows, and involuntarily I grasped a rope, expecting the next instant to be at the mercy of the waves. On — on — she came, her huge hull, as it rose on the wave, fearfully overtopping our own, to仆turning, at the first shock, to crush us. A second and wilder cry of agony burst from every lip, but, at that instant, she swerved, what seemed a hair's breadth, to one side, her bowsprit grazed ours in passing, and she whirled by like a bird on the wing.

The scene did not occupy a minute. So suddenly had been the appearance of the ship, so instant had been our peril, and so rapidly had the moment of danger come and gone, that it will ever seem to me like a dream; and when, after a second's delay, the ill-fated ship passed away into the darkness under our eyes, and the ranks of her crew were lost in the upper of the air, I could not tell whether what we had just beheld had been real. But a curse at the fates of my messmates despatched my perplexity, for in every countenance was written the history of the forebodings of agonizing suspense. A profound silence, nowwhil, reigned on our decks, every eye being strained after the drowning man-of-war. At length Merrivale spoke:

"It is a miracle how we escaped," said then in a voice that he added, "the Lord have mercy on all on board your ship. But hark!" he suddenly exclaimed, and a wild, thin cry, as if a hundred voices had united in a shriek of agony, struggled up from seaward.

Years have passed since then, and the hair that was once black has now turned to gray, but that awful sound yet rings in my ears; and often since have I started from my sleep, fancying that I saw again that spectral ship passing by through the gloom, or heard that cry of agony drowning, for the moment, the rising tempest. And I'd curl flat at the sound, and we gaze into each other's faces with terror on every line of countenance. More than a minute passed before a word was said; and, during the interval, we sought to catch a repetition of the cry, however faint; but only the singing of the gulls through the hunger, the whistle of the hurricane overhead, and the wall roar of the breakers under our lee, came to our ears. No further token of that ill-fated ship ever reached us. Not a living soul, of the hundreds who had crowded her deck when she whistled across our course, landed on that coast. With all their sins on their heels, and from those they loved and by whom they were loved in return, her crew went down into the deep, "unknelled, uncoffined, and unknown."

When that wintry storm had passed away, the timbers of a wreck were found strewing the inhospitable shore, with here and there a dead body clinging to a fragment of a spar, but neither man nor child survived to tell how agonizingly they struggled against their fate, to practice the infatuation which they had promised in their hour of bitter need. And when the summer sun came forth, kissing the bright waters of the Atlantic, and children laughingly gathered shells along the shore, who would have thought that, a few months before, the heavens had looked down, in that very spot, on the wild ~~strength~~ of the dying? But I pass on.

At length that weary night were away, and when morning dawned, we saw the full extent of the danger we had escaped. All along the coast, at a distance of more than a mile from the shore, stretched a narrow shelf, over which the breakers were now boiling as in a whirlpool. It needed no prophet to foretell our fate, had we struck and this surf. No boat could have lived in that raging sea, and our frail craft would have been racked to pieces in less than half an hour. Nothing but the energy of the skipper in crowding ~~the~~ ^{as} on the schooner, though at the imminent hazard of carrying away the masts, and thus insuring certain destruction, enabled us to escape the doom which beset the ill-fated man-of-war.

CHAPTER XI

THE BRIDE OF POMFRET HALL

In a few days we made Block Island, and hauled up for Newport, where we expected to meet THE ARROW. It was a beautiful day in winter when we entered the outer harbor, and the waves which a light frosty breeze just rippled, glittered in the sunlight as if the surface of the water had been strewed with diamonds. The church-bells were merrily ringing in honor of the intelligence, which had just been received, of the alliance with France. We came to anchor under a salvo from the batteries of the fort, and of our consort who was already at anchor in the inner harbor.

Merry was our meeting with the war-room and cockpit of THE ARROW, and many a gay sally bore witness to the hilarity with which we greeted each other after our mutual adventures. For a week, the town rang with our mirth. At the end of that time, I managed to obtain leave of absence, and, remembering my promise to Mr. St. Claire, started for Pomfret Hall. As I lay back in the coach, and was whirled over the road behind two fast horses, I indulged in many a recollection of the past, in not a few reveries over the future. But most of all, I wondered how Annette would receive me. The thoughts of our last parting were fresh in my memory, but months of changes had since elapsed, and might not corresponding changes have occurred in her feelings toward me? Would she meet me with the delightful frankness of our childhood, or with the trembling embarrassment of our few last interviews? Or might she not, perhaps, as too many before had done, welcome me with a cold politeness that would be more dreadful to me than even scorn? The longer I thought of the subject, the more uncertainty I felt as to my reception. At first I had pictured to myself Annette, standing blushing and embarrassed on the steps, to greet me as soon as I alighted; but when I came to reflect, I felt that, like all lovers, I had dreamed impossibilities; and I almost laughed at my wild vision when I recalled to my mind that I stood in no other light to Annette than as an acquaintance, at most as a friend. My heart then took a sudden revulsion, and I asked myself, might not she love another? What had I ever said to induce her to believe that I loved her? Could she be expected to give her affections, indeed, to any one, but especially to a poor adventurer, whose only fortune was his sword, when the proudest of the land would consider her but as a boon? What naughtness to think that, surrounded as she had been

had been by suitors, her heart before this had not been given to another! As I thought this, I fancied that I was going only to behold the triumph of some more fortunate rival, and I cursed myself for having come on such an errand. At one moment I was almost resolved to turn back. But again hope dawned in my bosom. I felt that Annette must have seen my love, and I recalled to mind how tremulously alive she had been, during our last interview, to my attentions. Surely, then, she had not forgotten me. I was loath her injustice, and with this conviction, I leaned out of the carriage window, and ordered the postillion to drive faster.

The second day brought me in sight of the gates of Pompet Hall, and as I dashed up to them, and felt that my suspense would soon be terminated, my heart fluttered wildly. As the carriage whirled into the avenue, I saw a procession of the neighboring village girls proceeding to the hall. They were dressed in white, and bore flowers, as if going to some festival. At that instant I recollect that the church-bells had been ringing merrily ever since I came within hearing of them, and, with a sudden thrill of agony, I stopped the coach as the village girls stepped aside to let it pass, and inquired the meaning of their procession. My voice was so husky that, at first, it was indistinguishable; and I was forced to repeat the question.

"Oh! it's the meaning of our going to the hall, that the gentleman would know," said a female at the head of the procession; then turning to me she said, with a courtesy. "The young mistress was married this morning, and we are going to the hall to present her with flowers. This is her school, sir, and I am the mistress."

I sank back in the carriage with a groan. At first I thought of ordering the postillion to return, but then I resolved to go forward, and, concealing my sufferings, appear the gayest of the gay.

"Yes!" I exclaimed, in bitter agony, "never shall she know the misery she has inflicted. And yet, O God! that Annette should thus have deserted me—" and with these words, I sternly bid the postillion drive on. But I felt like a criminal bound to his execution.

The ten minutes that elapsed before I reached the door of the Hall seemed to be protracted to an age, and were spent in an agony of pain no pen can describe. Oh! to be thus deceived—to part from Annette as we had parted—to think of her by day, and dream of her by night—to look forward to our meeting with a thrill of hope and strive to win renown that I might shed a lustre around my hab—er than, after all my toils, and hopes, and struggles, to come back and find her wedded—God of heaven! it was too much. But, notwithstanding my agony, my pride reviled at the display of any outward emotion. I would not for worlds that Annette should know the torture her faithlessness had inflicted on my bosom. Nor I would smooth my brow, subdue my tongue, and control my every look. I would jest, smile, and be the gayest of the gay. I would wish Annette and her husband a long and happy life, and no one

should suspect that, under my assumed composure, I wore a heart rankling with a wound that no time nor circumstance could cure. I resolved to see Annette, to play my part to the end, and then, returning to my post, to find an honorable death on the first deck we should encounter. My reflections, however, were cut short by the stoppage of the vehicle before the door of the mansion. A servant I used to unlo the coach-steps, and, nervously musing for the interview that was at hand, I stepped out. The man's face was strange to me, and I saw that it displayed some embarrassment.

"Will you announce me to Mr. St. Clair," I said, "as Lieutenant Cavendish?"

"Mr. St. Clair, I regret to say," replied the man politely, "is not at the Hall. The carriages have just driven off, and if they had not taken the back road through the park, would have met you in the avenue. Mr. St. Clair accompanies the bride and groom on a two weeks' tour."

My course was at once taken; and, as the criminal feels a lightening of the heart when reprieved, so I experienced a relief in entering the trying experiment of mingling with the bridal party. Having re-entered the carriage steps, I left my name with the servant, and, ordering the coachman to drive off, left Pontefret Hall, with the resolution never again to return. At the village I paused a few moments to dictate a letter to Mr. St. Clair, in which I regretted my impertinent arrival, and wished a long life of happiness to him and to Annette. Then, re-entering the coach, I threw myself back on the seat, and, while I was being whirled away from Pontefret Hall, gave myself up to the most bitter reflections. As I now and then looked out of the window and recognized familiar objects along the road, I contrasted my present despondency with the hope that had cheered my heart when I passed them a few hours before. Then, every pulse beat faster with delicious anticipations; now, I scarcely waited more than an honorable death. At length my thoughts took a turn, and I reviewed the past, calling to mind every little word and act of Annette, from which I could draw either hope or despair.

"Fool that I was," I exclaimed, "to think that the wealthy heiress could stoop to love a penniless officer. And yet," I continued, "my fathers were as noble as hers; and I enjoyed wealth and honors to which the St. Clairs never aspired." But again a review扫除 across my feelings, and I said, "O Annette, Annette! had you but known my history, you might have paused. But God grant you may feel a heart as true to you as mine." Thus harassed by conflicting emotions, now giving way to my love, and now yielding to long-grown and pride, I spent the day, and when at last, preparing to retiring, I happened to cast a look into the mirror, I started at my lugubrious appearance. But there are moments of agony which do the work of years.

CHAPTER. XII.

THE LAST SHOT AND ITS DOOM.

My mess-mates, one and all, were astonished at my speedy return, but luckily it had been determined to put to sea at once, so that if I had remained at Pontefret Hall until the expiration of my leave of absence, I should have lost the cruise. One or two of my companions, who prided themselves on their superior intelligence, gave me the credit of having, by some unknown means, heard of the change in our day of sailing, and so hastened my return to my post. They little dreamed of the true cause, for to them, as to all others, I wore the same mask of assumed gaiety.

We sailed in company with THE ARROW, but, ere we had been out a week, were separated from our consort. Our orders were in such an emergency, to make the best of our way southward, and rendezvous at St. Domingo.

I had turned in one night, after having kept watch on deck until midnight, when in the midst of a refreshing sleep, I was suddenly awoken by a hand laid on my shoulder, at the same time that a voice said:

"Hist! Gavenish; don't talk in your sleep."

I started to my feet, but, for a moment, my faculties were in such a whirl that the dream in which I had been reveling, mingling with the scene before my waking senses, confused and bewilpered me so that I knew not what I uttered.

"So, Gavenish! Pontefret Hall! why your wits are wool gathering, my lad fellow," said the doctor — for I now recognized my old friend — "but what have you been dreaming? You look as if you thought the sweetest dream to call you from Paradise."

I had indeed been dreaming. I fancied I was far away, wandering in the hazy shades of Pontefret Hall, with Annette leaning on my shoulder and gazing up into my face with looks of misery and gloom. I heard the rustle of the leaves, the jocund song of the birds, and the rushing sound of the woodland waterfall, but sweeter, ay! a thousand times sweeter than all these, came to my ears the low whisper of my beloved bride. Was I not happy? And I was. I sat on a verdant bank, and, with her hand clasped in mine, while her head resting on my bosom, we talked of the happiness that was to be in store for us, and projected a thousand plans for the future. But a vision as like this I awoke to the consciousness that Annette was lost to me forever, and that even now the smiles and caresses of which I had dreamed were being bestowed upon another.

A pang of keenest agony, a sharp, sudden pang, as if an iron had shot through my heart, almost deprived me for a moment of utterance, and I was fain to lean against a timber for support. But this weakness was only momentary, for, rallying every energy, I conquered my feelings, though not so soon but that the doctor saw my emotion.

"Are you sick, my dear fellow?" he said anxiously. "No, well, you do look better, now. But I came to inform you that as nearly a leering craft as ever you saw is dolefully hastening us to the windward, and the Lord only knows whether we won't be prisoners, and maybe dead men before night."

I hurried on my clothes, and, following him to the deck, saw, at the first glance, that the good doctor's fears respecting the strange sail were not without foundation. She was a sharp, low brig, with masts raking far aft, and a spread of canvas towering from her decks sufficient to have driven a slop-of-war. The haze of the morning had concealed her from sight until within the last five minutes; but now the broad disk of the sun, rising majesticly behind her, brought out her masts, tracery, and hull in bold and distinct relief.

"A rover by ——," said the skipper, who had been scrutinizing the strange sail through a glass; "and she is triple car fare," he continued, in a whisper to me. "We have no choice, either, but to fight."

"She sails like a witch, too," I replied, in the same low tone, "and I would overhaul us, no matter what her position might be."

"I wish we were a dozen leagues away," said the captain, shrugging his shoulders; "there is little honor and no profit in fighting these cut-throats, and if we are whipt, as we shall be, they will slit our windpipes as if we were so many sheep in a slaughter-hough. Bah!"

"Not so," I exclaimed enthusiastically. "we will descend in hand. Since these murderers have crossed our path we must, if every thing else fail, suffer them to board us, and then blow the schooner out of water. I myself will fire the train."

"Now, by the God above us, you speak as a brave man should, and shame my momentary disgust, for fear I will not call it. No, Jack Merrivale never wanted courage, however prudential and wise he has been. But little did I think that you, Gwydir, would ever show less prudence than myself, as you have to-day. You seem a changed man."

"I am one," I exclaimed; "but that is neither here nor there. When once you freebooter gets alongside, Harry Gwydir will not be behindhand in doing his duty."

My superior, at any other time, could not have failed to like the excitement under which I spoke, but now his mind was too fully occupied to give my demeanor a second thought, and our encounter was cut short by a ball from the pirate, which, whistling over our heads, plumped into the sea some fathoms distant. At the same

instant a mass of dark bunting shot up to the gaff of the brig, and, slowly unrolling, blew out steadily in the breeze, disclosing a black flag, unrelieved by a single emblem. But we well knew the meaning of that ominous ensign.

"He comes us with his accursed flag," said the skipper energetically: "By the Lord that liveth, he shall feel that freemen know how to defend their lives and honor. Call all the men, and then to quarters. We will blow yon scoundrels out of water, or die on the last plank."

Never did I listen to more vehement, more soul stirring eloquence than that which rolled, like a tide of fire, from the captain's lips when the men had gathered last. Every eye flashed with indignation, every bosom heaved with high and noble daring, as he pointed impotently to the foe, and asked if there was one who heard him that wished to shrink from the contest. To his impassioned appeal they answered with a loud huzza, brandished their cutlasses above their heads and swearing to stand by him to the last.

"I know it, my brave boys — I remember how you fought the privateer's men," said most of his old crew had re-entered; "but you're cut-throats are still more deceitful, and blood-thirsty. We have nothing to hope for from them but a short shift and the yard-arm. We fight, not for our country and property alone, but for our lives also. The *La'te Falcon* has struck down too many prizes already, to allow the coward's feather now. Let us make these decks slippery with our best blood rather than surrender. Stand by me, if they board us, and — my word on it — the survivors will long talk of this glorious day. And now, my brave lads, splice the main brace, and then to quarters."

An roar cheer followed the close of this harangue, when the men gathered at their quarters, each one as he passed to his station receiving a glass of grog. As I ran my eye along the decks, and saw the stalwart frames and flashing eyes of the crew, I felt assured that to-day was destined to be desperately contested; and then I thought of the vast odds against which we had to contend, and the glorious decks which this superiority would make room for. I experienced an exultation which I can not describe. The time for which, in the bitterness of my heart, I had prayed, was come; and I resolved to live to see this day which, if they ever reached the ears of Antette, should prove to her that I died the death of a gallant soldier. But thought that, perhaps, she might regret me when I was gone, as sweeter to me than the song of many waters.

Little time, however, was left for such emotions, for scarcely had the men taken their stations when the pirate, who had hitherto been maneuvering for a favorable position and only occasionally firing a shot, opened his batteries on us, discharging his guns in such quick succession that his sides seemed on continual blaze, and his tiller-boys were to be seen retreating backward from the smoke of his broadside. Instantaneously the iron tempest came hurling across us, and for a space I was bewildered by the rending of timbers, the

falling of spars, and the agonizing shrieks of the wounded. The main-topmast came rattling to the deck with all its hunger at the very moment that a messmate fell dead beside me. For a few minutes all was consternation and confusion. So rapid had been the discharges, and so well aimed had been each shot, that, in the twinkling of an eye, we saw ourselves almost a wreck on the water, and comparatively at the mercy of our foe.

"Clear away this hamper," shouted the skipper, "stand by your guns forward there, and give it to the pirate."

With the word the two light pieces and the gun-milchips opened on the now rapidly closing foe; but the metal of all except the swivel was so light that it did no perceptible damage on the unscrupulous hull of our antagonist. The ball from the long gun, however, swept the decks of the foe, and appeared to have caused no little havoc in its course. But the broadside did not check the approach of the rover. His object was manifestly to run us afoul and board us. Steadily, therefore, he maintained his course, scarcely a hair's breadth at our discharge, but keeping right on as if scorning our futile efforts to check his progress. We did not, however, intermit our exertions. Although crippled we were not disheartened — despairing, we entertained no thought of submission, but rallying around our guns, we fought them like lions at bay, firing with such rapidity that our decks, and the ocean around, soon came to be almost obscured in the thick fleecy veil of smoke that settled slowly on the water. For a short space we even lost sight of our antagonist, and the gunners paused, uncertain where to fire; but suddenly the lofty spars of the pirate were seen riding above the white fog, scarcely a pistol-shot from us, and in another instant, with a deafening crash, the rover ran us afoul, his bowsprit jutting in our fore-rigging as he approached us head on. And, before we could recover from our surprise we heard a stern voice crying out in the Spanish tongue for bearers, and immediately a dark mass of ruffians gathered, like a cluster of bees, on the bowsprit of the foe, with cutlasses brin-fished aloft, preparatory to a descent on our decks.

"Rally to repel boarders!" thundered the skipper, springing forward; "ho! best back the bloodhounds from your maws!" And with the word, he made a blow at a desperado who, at that instant, sprang into the fore-rigging; when my superior drew his knife, it was red with the heart's blood of the assailant, who, though hardly forward with a dullplash, sprang a second on the water, like a wounded water-fowl, and then sank forever. For a single blow his companions stood appalled, and then, with a savage yell, leaped on our decks, fiercely attacking our little band. In vain our gunners inspired every inch of ground — in vain did all our men of the assault die; yet the deck with his blood. Steadily sprang the ruffians, and were steadily forced backward, until at length the wretched corsair was in possession of the deck, and a solid mass of fiersters was advancing on the starboard side of the open main-hatch, in

exer pursuit of the retreating crew. I had foreseen this result to the event, and instead, therefore, of aiming to repel the boarders, had chosen to load one of the lighter guns with grape, and dragging it aboard, so as to command this very path; - a thing which had not been enabled to perform unassisted by either party to the dire extent of the case. I had hardly finished my fire battery, when not three minutes had elapsed from the first onset of the boarders, when my masses were even driving toward me, as I have described, beaten in by the solid masses of the energy. Almost the fugitives had passed the hatchway, and the foremost desperadoes of the assailing crew were even now within three feet of the muzzle of my gun, when I signaled to my confederate to jerk off the cap which had masked our piece. Quick as lightning, I applied the match, and the whole fiery extract was belched upon the air. Language can not depict the fearful havoc of that discharge. The ball, one of fire and steel, met in its way lengthwise, through the broad and heavy lead column, scattering the dying and the dead before its track, as a wild and savage the forest-trees.

"Now charge!" I shouted, as if seized with a sudden frenzy, springing into the midst of the fire. "No quarter to the knaves. How soon to the basket," and following every word with a blow, and surrounded by our men, who seemed to eat a fiery fury, we made such havoc among these of the pirates whom the grape had spared, that, astonished, paralyz'd, disconcerted, and finally struck with mortal fear, they fled willy from the schooner, some regaining their craft by the bowsprit, some planking overboard and swimming to her, and some leaping headlong into the deep never to rise again. Seizing an ax, I hastily cut our hamper loose from the foe, and with that at hand the two vessels slowly parted.

"Now to your guns, my men," shouted the skipper, unconscious of a dangerous wound, in the excitement of the moment; "give it to 'em before they can rally. Fire!"

We poured in our broadsides like hail, riddling even the sides of our foe, and making his decks slippery with blood, and all this before the discomfited freebooters could rally to their guns and return our shots.

"Ah! he has waked up at last," said my old friend, the captain of the *Long Tom*, "and she may yet regain the day if we don't fight like devils. Bring me that shot from the galley."

"In G-! It's mine, what do you mean?" said I, as he coolly sat down by his piece. "In with the ball and let the rover have it — not a moment is to be lost."

"Ay! I knows that, lieutenant; and here comes the settler for which I waited," he exclaimed, as the cook brought a red hot shot from the galley; "I thought I'd venture on a little experiment of my own, and I've seen 'em do wonders with these fiery bombs afore now. There — there she has it," he exclaimed, as the shot was sent down; "now God have mercy on them varmint's souls."

From some strange, unaccountable presentiment, I stepped in

chaneously backward and cast an eye at the brig, which had now floated to some distance. As I did so, a trail of fire glanced before my sight, and I saw the summering shot enter her side. Thought was not quicker than the explosion which followed, shaking the sea beneath, and the sky above, almost deafening the ear with its ulcerous concussion, while instantaneous a gush of flame shot far up into the sky; the masts of the vessel were lifted perpendicularly upward, and the whole air was filled with shattered timbers and mangled human bodies that fell the next minute patterning around us into the deep. Oh God! the fearful sight! The shrieks of the wounded and drowning — the awful struggles of the poor wretches in the water — the sudden cloud that settled over the scene of death, will they ever pass away from my memory? But I drop a veil over a sight too horrible to recount. Suffice it to say, of all the rover's crew, not one survived to see that sun go down. A few we picked up with our boats, but they die ere night. The cause of the explosion is ~~now~~ a toll. The brig's magazine had been struck and fired by our LAST SHOT.

CHAPTER XIII.

THE DOOM OF THE DART.

The day had been close and sultry, but, as sunset drew on, a light breeze sprung up, which diffused a delicious coolness throughout the ship, imparting new vigor to the panting and almost exhausted men. Invigorated by the welcome wind, a group of us gathered on the weather quarter to behold the sun go down; and those who have never seen such a spectacle at sea, can have no idea of the vastness with which it fills the mind. Slowly the broad disk wheel'd down toward the west, seeming to dilate as it approached the horizon, and, as its lower edge touched the distant sea-horizon, trailing a long line of golden light across the unlabring surface of the deep. At that instant the scene was magnificent. Pile on pile of clouds, assuming every fantastic shape, and varying from red to purple, and from purple to gold, by heaped around the setting god. For a few moments the billows could be seen rising and falling against the broad disk of the descending luminary: while, with a slow and scarcely perceptible motion, he gradually slid beneath the horizon. Insensibly the brilliant hues of the clouds died away, changing from gorgeous crimson, through almost every gradation of color, until at length a faint emerald green invested the whole western sky, slowly fading into a deep blue, as it approached the zenith.

"Beautiful!" exclaimed the skipper; "one might almost become poetical in gazing on such a scene."

The sun had now been hid for some minutes, and the apple-green of the sky was rapidly becoming colder and more indistinct, though the edge of a solitary dark cloud, hanging a few degrees above the horizon, was yet tipped with a faint crimson. Meantime the stars began to appear in the opposite firmament, one after another twinkling into sight, as if by magic, until the whole eastern heaven was gauded with them. I looked around the horizon. Never before had its immensity so forcibly impressed me. The vast concave, swelling high above me and gradually rounding away toward the distant sea-boar, seemed almost of illimitable extent; and when, over all the mighty space of ocean included within its circuit, my eye rested on not a solitary sail, I experienced a sensation of loneliness, such as no pen can describe. And when the breeze again died away, leaving the sails idly flapping to and fro as the schooner rocked on the swell, my imagination suggested that perhaps it might be our doom, as it had been that of others, to lie for days, nay, weeks and months, powerless in the midst of that desert latitude, shut out from the world, enclosed within the blue walls of that gigantic prison; and I shuddered, as well I might, at the very idea of such a fate.

It was now a dead calm. No perceptible agitation could be discovered on the surface of the deep, except the long undulating swell which never subsides, and which can be compared to nothing but the heavy breathing of some gigantic monster when lulled to repose. Now and then, however, a tiny ripple, occasioned by the gambol of some equally tiny inhabitant of the deep, would twinkle sharp in the starlight; while, close under the shadow of our hull, a keen eye might detect hundreds of the fairy fire-flies of the ocean, their phosphorescent lanterns glittering gayly as they shot to and fro. Absorbed in the contemplation of the spectacle, I suffered more than half an hour to pass undisturbed; and it was not until the sea began to be sensibly agitated, and the wind to freshen, that I looked up. The change which had come over the firmament astonished me, and requires a passing description.

When I first looked at the heavens, the whole eastern sky was thick sown with stars, though no moon had as yet appeared. Along the western sea-boar I still stretched the long line of pale apple-green which the setting sun had painted in that quarter. The firmament overhead was without a cloud, its dark azure surface sprinkled with stars. Between the zenith and eastern horizon hung the dark cloud which I have already mentioned, a black opaque mass of vapor apparently not larger than a captain's head. But every thing now presented a different aspect. The first thing that met my eye was the upper portion of the disk of the moon, peeping above the eastern sea-boar, the dark fiery red of its face betraying the existence of a thin mist in that direction. Fascinated by the sight, I remained gazing for more than a minute on the rising luminary, as she emerged gracefully and majestically from her watery bed. At length, and ap-

parently with an accelerated motion, she still suddenly abated the line on the horizon, pouring a line of silver light along the crests of the undulating swell, while instantaneously, as if part of an awful drama, she emerged from the mist that had surrounded her, and rose in in peevish brightness, eddying and unlimned, the storm. The sun was absent. One planet alone remained — it was the bright star, winking in almost equal beauty, a looker-on to the rest of the sister luminaries. Never before had I seen the hues of Morn, so which he pictures her as looking on the cloud-robes of Heaven, so vividly before my imagination.

When I turned my gaze seaward, how different the aspect! What met my eye! The little cloud which I have described, had grown to a gigantic size, and now obscured the whole horizon. It was not, extending its dark and jagged front a third of the way across the horizon, and placing its gloomy mass high up toward the zenith. Here and there, where a thinner edge than as I was I could see the light, it caught the rays of the rising luminary without reflecting back, so that the cloud seemed laced with silver. The sun, immediately under this gloomy bank of vapor, was of the color of ink, and reminded me of the fabled waters of Acheron. The whole scene was calculated to fill the mind with awe and alarm. As for myself and, I confess, my own feelings partook of the unworthy character.

The wind was rapidly freshening; but, instead of setting his sail fully from any quarter, it blew in fitful gusts, sweeping all round the horizon. Yet it brought a delicious coolness with it. It was peculiarly refreshing after the heat of the day. The sun was soon to rise, and as the dark billows heaved up in the spectral light, they wore an aspect so ghastly that I almost shrank to look at them — an aspect, however, that was perfectly removed when the sun's first puffs of air crisped their edges into silver, or rolled a soft flame along light along their surface. With the setting of the sun, the schooner began slowly to move ahead, but, ever and anon, as the breeze died away, or struck her from a new quarter, she would settle like a log on the water, moaning as if in pain. At such times the dying exhalence of the wind, wafting through the rigging, would on the air with strange, weird power.

"A threatening prospect," said the skipper, after a long pause, — breaking the profound silence which had reigned for several minutes; "we shall have a tempest before long, and I fear it will be no child's play."

"I never saw such ominous signs before. The very air seemed oppressed and sick, as if it trembled at approaching tempest. Mark the faces even of our oldest veterans — they betray a vague remnant of fear, such as I never saw on the countenances of the old."

"Ay!" replied the skipper, abstractedly, for he was looking astern, "the devil comes up like a shadow. He goes round and over and over, making his dark mass thicker; it reminds me of the mountainous which the old Titans, we read of in story, used to roll against Jove. But here am I thinking of classic fables when I

ought to be taking in sail. Ho!" he exclaimed, lifting his voice, a sharp gust, premonitory of the coming hurricane, whistled across the halyards. "in sail — every rag!"

Not long was to be lost. During the short space we had been conversing, the dark clouds returned, but increased their velocity threefold, and, even as the skipper spoke, the most advanced of them had overshot us, and with its sand-bird pall. As the momentary puff of rain accompanied it, it did away, a few large heavy rain-drops pattered on the deck, and then all was still again. The men sprang to their stations, at the voice of their skipper, and waited to double back by these signs of approaching danger, soon relaxed our hold on the sailor-haly, with bare poles, running on the deck. Not long had this task been completed, when the gale burst forth in all its fury, roaring, hissing, and howling through the rigging, and drenching us with the cords of spray that it tore from the bosom of the deep and bore onward in its fierce embraces. For a few minutes we could scarcely stand before the blast. The schooner groaned, and starting forward at the first touch of the hurricane, bore a steel when he feels the spur, went careering along, her tiller to and fro in the gale, and her hull shrouded in the flying spray which drove onward with even greater velocity than ourselves. In this fierce encounter with the elements, every rope and stick strained and cracked almost to breaking. All at once this hurricane died out, and then an awful stillness fell on the scene. Not a voice spoke, not a footfall was heard, scarcely a breath broke the towering silence. The schooner rose and fell ominously on the agitated swell. Suddenly a flash of lightning played far off on the dark edges of the cloud before us, and then followed a low, hoarse growl of distant thunder. Scarcely a minute elapsed before a large rain-drop fell on my face, and instantaneously, as if the heavens were about to roar us, a deluge of rain rushed downward, hissing and crackling along the decks, and almost pinning us to our places; while the wind, bursting out afresh, swept wildly across the sea, and driving the spray and rain madly before it, produced a scene of confusion and terror almost indescribable. For some minutes I could see nothing in the dark darkness which now surrounded us — could hear nothing but the roar of the hurricane and the splash of the waves. But suddenly a blinding flash shot from a cloud almost directly overhead, lighting up the dark, spars, and guns for an instant, with its perpendicular glare, and striking the ocean a few fathoms astern, poised up the waters, which it flung in volumes of spray in every direction. Before a clock could tick, the report followed, surprising us with its deafening roar, and rattling and crackling as it rolled down the sky. Never shall I forget the scene of darkness, as I stood there in that uncertainty glare. And when the darkness had restored its sway, and the roar of the gale had died in the distance, my eyes still abhored with that intense light, and the crackling of the bolt rang in my ears.

"East, by east-sou' east," said the skipper, "and driving like death. God of Heaven, what a storm!"

The words had scarcely left his mouth before another peal of thunder even more awful than the preceding one I have described, burst overhead, and stunning us for an instant with its terrific explosion, rattled down the sky, crackling and re-crackling in its retreat, as if the firmament were crushing to its center: it was a sound louder than pealed by a drum, such as I had never seen before, blinding me instantaneously with its glare, and making every object swim dizzily before the brain. On the instant I felt a stunning shock, and was prostrated on the deck, while a strong smell of sulphur pervaded the atmosphere. The deluge of rain ceased, and I looked up in alarm. "Good God! the foremast was in flames! *We had been struck with lightning!*"

Quick as thought the whole horrors of our situation rose before me. We were on a ruthless sea amid a raging storm. That there was little hope of extinguishing the flames, was evident, for, even while these thoughts flashed through my mind, a volume of smoke puffed up through the forecastle, and a cry ran through the deck that the whole forward part of the schooner was on fire. There was but time, however, to be lost, if we would make any effort to save ourselves; and, faint as was the hope of success, it was determined to attempt to smother the flames, by fastening down the hatches and excluding the air. But the fierce heat that filled the deck told us that the endeavor would be in vain; nor was it long before the fore-hatch was blown up with a loud explosion, while a stream of fire shot high up into the air; and, the next instant, the foremast itself caught hold of the rigging, wrapping shrouds, ropes, and yards in a sheet of lurid flame. The rapidity with which all this occurred was incredible. It seemed as if but a minute had elapsed since that terrific bolt had burst above us, and now the whole forward part of the schooner was a mass of fire, that streamed out before the tempest like a blood-red banner; showers of sparks, and even burning fragments of the wreck, flying far away ahead on the gale. There were periods, however, even of long duration, which appear to be but momentary, and so it was now. So wholly had every energy been devoted to the preservation of the ship, that time had passed almost unnoticed, though a full half hour had elapsed since we had been struck with lightning. The storm, however, still raged as furiously as ever; for though the rain was less violent, the wind blew a hurricane, threatening to settle down into a long-sustained gale. Had the currents of water, which first drenched us, continued falling, there might have been some hope of extinguishing the flames; but the subsidence of the rain, and the unabated violence of the wind, rendered the situation of the schooner hopeless.

"We can do nothing more, I fear," at length said the skipper, drawing me aside, "the fire is on the increase, and even the currents have turned against us. We must leave the little DART to her fate, unless you can think of something else to do?" and he looked inquiringly at me.

"Alas!" I replied, with a mournful shake of my head, "we

bare done every thing that mortal man can do, but in vain. We must now think of saving ourselves. Had we not better order out the boats?"

The skipper did not, for a moment, reply to my question, but stood, with his arms folded on his breast, and a face of the deepest dejection, gazing on the burning forecastle. At length he spoke.

"Many a long day have we sailed together, in many a bold fray have we fought for each other, and now to leave you, my gallant men, ah! little did I think this would be your doom. But God's will be done. We must all perish sooner or later, and better go down here than rot, a forgotten hulk, on some mucky shore — better consume to ashes than fall a prey to some huge cormorant of an enemy. And yet," he continued, his eye lighting up, "and yet I should have wished to die with you under the guns of one of those gigantic monsters — ay! die battling for the possession of your deck inch by inch." At this instant one of the forward guns, which had become heated almost to redness in the conflagration, exploded. The sound seemed to recall him to himself. He started as if roused from a reverie, and, noticing me beside him, recollecting my question. Immediately resuming his usual energy, he proceeded to call out the boats, and provide provisions and a few hasty instruments, with a calmness which was in striking contrast to the raging sea around, and the lurid fire raging on our bows.

The high discipline of the men enabled us to complete our preparations in a space of time less than one half that which would have been consumed by an ordinary crew under like circumstances; and, indeed, in many cases, all subordination would have been lost, and perhaps the ruin of the whole been the consequence. The alertness of the men and the forecastle of the officers were indeed needed; for our preparation had scarcely been completed when the heat on the deck became intolerable. The fire had now reached the main-hatch, and, notwithstanding the violence of the gale, was extending all with great rapidity, and had already enveloped the mainmast in its embraces. For some time before we left the schooner, the heat, even at the rail, almost scorched the skin from our faces; nor did we descend into the boats a minute too soon. This was afeat also by no means easily accomplished, so great was the agitation of the sea. As I looked on the frail boats which were to receive us, and thought of the perils which environed us, of our distance from land, and the slight quantity of provisions we had been enabled to save, I felt that in all human probability, we should never again set foot on shore, even if we survived until morning. To my own fate I was comparatively indifferent, for life had now lost all charms to me; but when I reflected on the brave men who were to be consigned to the same destiny, and of the ties by which many of them were bound to earth — of the wives who would become widows, of aged parents who would be left childless, of children for whom the orphan's lot was preparing — the big tears gushed into my eyes, and courset down my cheeks, though unobserved.

"All ready," said the skipper, who was the last to leave the deck, and pausing to cast a mournful look at his little craft, he sprang into the boat and we pushed off from the quarter. For some minutes, however, it seemed doubtful whether our frail barge could hold in the tumultuous sea that now raged. One minute we were hurried to the sky on the bosom of a wave, and then we plunged headlong into the dark trough below, the walls of water on either hand menacingly threatening to overwhelm us. But though small, our boats were buoyant, and rode gallantly onward. Every exertion was made, meanwhile, to increase our distance from the schooner, for our departure had been hurried by the fear that the fire would soon reach the magazine, and our proximity to the burning ship still continued to threaten us with destruction in case of an explosion. The men, conscious of the peril, strained every sinew to effect our object, and thus battling against wind and wave we struggled on our way.

With every fathom we gained, the sight of the burning ship increased in magnificence. The flames had now seized the whole after part of the schooner as far back as the companion way, so that hull, spars, and rigging were a sheet of fire, which, caught in the fierce embrasures of the hurricane, now whirled around, now straightened straight out, and now broke into a thousand forked tongues, licking up the masts and around the spars like so many fiery serpents. Millions of sparks poured down to leeward, while ever and anon a huge patches of flame would be torn from the main body of the conflagration and blown far away ahead. Volumes of dark, puffy smoke, curling up from the decks of the schooner, often partially concealed a portion of the flames, but they reappeared a moment afterward with even greater vividness. In some places it was the conflagration that the fire was at a white heat. The white horizon was illuminated with the light, except just over and about of the schooner, where a black smoky cloud had gathered, like the wing of some gigantic master of another world; and no description can adequately picture the spectral aspect of the dark waves that rolled up their ghostly crest beneath the sky.

"She can not last much longer," said the Doctor, who was in my boat, "the flames will soon reach the magazine."

"Ay! ay! and look there—"

As I spoke, a vivid, blinding jet of fire streaked high up into the air, while the masts of the schooner could be seen, and the deck, shooting arrow-like to the sky. Instantaneously a roar as of ten thousand batteries smote the ear; and then came the falling of fragments of the hull and spars as they fell on the water. How white these sounds contained, a darkness that brought to my mind that of the day of doom enveloped us, though that infernal light still swam in our eyes, producing a thousand hideous blots and stains. No word was spoken, but each one held his breath in awe, and then came a long, deep drawn sigh, that seemed to go round and round from each one in the boat. The Dart was no more. We were alone in the boundless deep, where with a mournful ringing

around us, alone without any hope of rescue, and a thousand miles from land. God only knew whether it would be our lot to perish by starvation, or sink at an earlier hour a prey to the overwhelming deep.

CHAPTER XIV

THE OPEN BOAT — DEATH OF THE SHIP'S BOY — A SAIL

How shall I describe the horror of that seemingly endless night? Dazed onward at the mercy of the waves, possessing just sufficient control over the boat to keep her head in the proper direction — now lost sight altogether of our consort, and now hanging on the top of the wave while she lay drearily under us, we passed the moments in a succession of hopes and fears which no human pen can adequately describe. As the night advanced our sufferings increased. The men, worn out with fatigue, were kept at their oars only by the consciousness that even a moment's respite might be our destruction. With difficulty we maintained even the slightest communication with our fellow-sufferers in the other boat, and, as the hours went away, communication became almost impossible. It was only at intervals that we caught sight of our companions through the spray, or heard their loud buzzes in answer to our shouts. And no one, except he who has been in a like situation, can tell how our sense of loneliness was relieved when we saw these glimpses of our consort, or caught the welcome sound of other voices than our own across that fathomless abyss.

At length a gigantic wave rolled up between us and the launch, and, when we rose from the trough of the sea, I fancied I heard the mournful, prolonged cry of human agony. At the sound, my heart failed in my veins, and I strove to pierce the obscurity ahead, hoping almost against hope that our companions yet survived, and that I might catch a glimpse of the launch; but my straining eyes dimmed the prospect in vain, for the thick darkness shut out everything from my vision, except when the ghastly foam whitened across the waves beside me. For an instant I tried to believe that what I had heard sprung from a disordered fancy, but the eager, yet terror-stricken faces of my shipmates beside me soon convinced me that I was not the only one who had heard that cry. We looked at each other for a moment, as men may be supposed to look who have seen a visitant from the tomb, and then, with one common impulse, we joined in a holler that rose wilfully to windward, swept down on us, rose again, and finally died away to leeward a melancholy echo.

No answering cry met our ears. Again and again we uttered in a shout — again and again the roar of the wind and wash of the waves was our only reply. Suddenly a flash of lightning blazed around us, and taking advantage of the momentary light that shone on the prospect, I gazed once more across the waste of waters. We hung, at the moment, on the topmost height of a mount in wave while beneath yawned a black abyss, along whose sides the sun was rolling in volumes, while the ghastly crests of each mighty billow and the pitchy darkness of the depths below were lit up with the awful glare of the lightning, presenting to the imagination a scene that recalled me of the lake of fire into which Milton's apostate spirits fell. Just at the lowest point of the vortex a boat was seen, but in upward, while, in close proximity to it, one or two human forms were struggling in the sea; but all in vain; for at every despairing stroke they were borne farther and farther from the few small planks which now were to them their world. Oh! never will that sight fade from my memory. A cry of horror broke simultaneously from all who beheld the scene, and long after it had vanished from our eyes, we heard the first despairing shriek of our drowning messengers, we saw the last look of agony ere they sank forever. To save them was beyond our power. As we were whirled down into the abyss, we leaned over the gunwale to catch, if possible, a sign of the vicinity of any of the sufferers, but our efforts were in vain; and, after watching and listening for more than an hour, we despaired in despair. As the storm gradually passed away, and the stars broke out on high, diffusing a shadowy light around us, we gazed again across the waste for some token of our lost messengers, but our search was in vain. The tale of their death, save as it is recorded in these harried pages, will never be told until the judgment-day.

Morning at length dawned. Insensibly the first cold streaks of day crept along the eastern horizon, gradually adding a gray twofold light over the vast expanse of waters around, and filling the mind with a sensation of utter desolation, which, though I had experienced it partially before, never affected me with such intensity as now. As far as the eye could stretch there was nothing to break the vast monotony of the horizon. All knew that we were out of the usual route of ships crossing the Atlantic, and that our chances of rescue were consequently lessened. We were, moreover, nearly a thousand miles from land, with but scanty provisions, and these damaged. Our boat was frail, and one far stronger had already been submerged — what, then, would probably — lay just to our side. It was easy to see that these thoughts were passing through the minds of all, and that a feeling akin to despair was gathering around every heart.

"Cheer up, my hearties!" at length said Bill Sarge, a favorite top-man, looking round on his companions; "it's always the darkest just before day, and if we don't see a sail now, we must look all the sharper for one to-morrow. Never say die when you bear the wind overhead, or see the waves following around you.

Twenty years have I sailed, in one craft or another, and often been in as bad scrapes as this — so it's hard to make me think we're going to Davy Jones' locker this time. Cheer up, cheer up, braves, and I'll give you a 'Bolt Hawthorne,'" and, with these words, he broke out into a song, whose words acted like an inspiration on the crew, and in a moment the air rung with the ballad, chorused forth by a dozen stentorian voices. And thus, alternating between hope and despair, we spent the day.

The gale had long since sunk into a light breeze, and the mountainous waves were rapidly subsiding into that long measured swell which characterizes the deep when not unusually agitated. Over the wide surface of the dark, azure sea, however, might be seen ten thousand crests of foam, one minute crizzling into existence, and the next disappearing on the declining surge; and as the hour approached high noon, each of these momentary sheets of spray glistened in the sunbeams like frosted silver. Overhead the dark, deep sky glowed as in a furnace, while around us the sea was as molten brass. Parched with thirst, yet not daring to exceed the allowance of water in which we had determined — burning in the intense heat, without the possibility of obtaining shelter — worn out in body and pressed in spirits, it required all my exertions, backed by one or two of the more sanguine of the crew, to keep the men from utter despair, nor was it until evening again drew on, and the intolerable heat of a tropical day had given way to the comparative coolness of twilight, that the general despondency gave way. Then again the hopes of the men revived, only, however, to be once more cast down with a darkness closed over the scene, with the certainty we should find no relief until the ensuing day.

Why need I recount the sufferings of that second night, which was only less dreadful than the preceding one, because the stars afforded us some comparative light, sufficing only, however, to keep us on the watch for a strange sail, without allowing us to hope for succor in our watch, unless by almost a miracle! Why should I narrate the alternation of hope and fear on the ensuing day, which differed from this one, save in the fiercer heat of noonday, and the more utter exhaustion of the men? What boots it to recount the six long days and nights, each one like its predecessor, only that each one grew more and more intolerable, until at length, exhausted and worn out, like the Israelites of old, we cried out at sunset, "Would God it were morning," and in the morning "Would God it were evening!"

And thus, week after week passed, until our provisions and water were exhausted, and yet no relief arrived, but day after day we floated helplessly on that boiling ocean, or were chilled by the icy and unwholesome dews of night. Hunger and thirst and heat — fever and despair contended together for the mastery, and we were the victims. Often before I had read of men who were thus exposed, coming at length to such a pitch of malice and despair, that they grovelled in the bottom of the boat, and cried out for death; but

never had I thought such things could be credible. Now how fearfully were my doubts removed! I saw the bound-armed men weeping like infants—I beheld those whose strength was as that of a giant, subdued and powerless—I heard men who, in other circumstances, would have clung tenaciously to life, now ready to yield their fate, or crying out, in their agony, for death to put an end to their suffering. No pen, however graphic—the mind, however vivid, can do justice to the frantic horrors of that night. Every morning dawned with the same hope of a deliverance, and every night gathered around us with the same apprehensions of a darkness that our hope was in vain.

There was one of my crew, a pale, delicate boy, whom I shall never forget. He was the only son of a widow, a French girl in the navy, though against her will, to earn an honest livelihood to support her. Though he had been among us but a short time, he had already distinguished himself by his address and bravery, when his frank demeanor had made him a universal favorite. Soon after his arrival at the DART he had borne up against our perils with a spirit that had astonished me. When the rest were sick, he was not sick, and no suffering, however great, could wring from him a groan. But on the twentieth day—after having lost his liberty for nearly eight hours—the mortal tempest proved too weak for him to stand. He was already dreadfully emaciated, and his mother had been surprised at his powers of endurance. But now he could hold out no longer, and was forced to confess that he was ill. I took his pulse—he was in a high fever. Pains like a small thorn throughout all that day and night he was tormented by. His ravings would have madded the heart of a Nero. He sobbed and sighed of his approaching end, and dwelt constantly, in thoughts of the last heart-renting agony, on his widow mother—on the wife he had deprived of her only son, and support. On the true consequence of his words. Now he aailed in the most languishing way to his father's death—now he remained the slave of his mother's heart when he proposed going to sea—now he was to feel her grief when she should hear of his unkind conduct, or when, a month, a year after year, in the vanings of his life, he would have to her bosom. There were stern iron fates, and there were gentle furies, who had, perhaps, never smitten a man, but the fountains of whose soul's were now his soul, and he wept as only a man can weep. There were stern furies, as it were, who would dash almost rank their hearts to pieces, yet who could not move from it to sorrow over him. And, as hour after hour passed away, and he waxed weaker and weaker, the iron spirit of death another vol. intreated to hold his aching hand, for aught but the long-widow, far, far away, who was even now perhaps making some little present for the boy whom she could never see again.

It was the evening of the day after his death, and I lay with his head on my lap, when the sailor, who had been up for upwards of more than an hour, woke up, and faintly opening his eyes, said

them to me. It was a moment before he could recognize me, but then a grateful smile stole over his wan face. I saw at a glance that the fever had passed away, and I knew enough of the dying hour to know that the return of reason had bidden a speedy dissolution. He tried an effort to raise his hand to his face, but weakness prevented him. Knowing his wishes, I took my handkerchief and wiped the dampness from his brow. Again that sweet smile played out of the boy, and it seemed as if thenceforth the expression of his countenance had in it something not of death. The hardy Seaton saw it too, and leaned forward to look at him.

"Thank you, Mr. Cavelish, thank you," he said, faintly; "but I can't trouble you — I feel better now — almost well enough to sit up."

"No — no, my poor boy," I said, though my emotions almost choked me, "I could — I merely hold you. You have slept well?"

"Only I have had such a sweet sleep, and it was full of happy dreams, though before that it seemed as if I was standing at my father's dying bed, or saw my mother weeping as she wept the night before my birth. And then," and a melancholy shadow passed across his face as he spoke, "I thought that she cried more bitterly than ever, and her very heart were breaking for some one who was dead — and it was us, too, as if I was that one," he said, with child-like simplicity. Then for a moment he mused sadly, but suddenly said, "Do you think I am dying, sir?"

The suddenness of this question startled me, and when I saw those large, clear eyes fixed on me, I was more embarrassed than ever.

"I hope not," I said, brokenly. He shook his head, and again that melancholy shadow passed across his face, and he answered in a tone of grief that brought the tears into other eyes than mine.

"I am I am. Oh! my poor mother — my poor widowed mother, who will care for you when I am gone?"

"I will," I said, with emotion; "if God spares me to reach the land, I will seek her out, and tell her all about you — what a noble boy you were —"

"And — and," and here a blush shot over his pale face, "will you — will she never wants — will you?" he continued, eagerly.

"I will," said I, "rest easy on that point, my dear, noble boy."

"Ay! and while there's a shot in the locker for Bill Seaton she will be ever sweet," said the big man, pressing in his own horny hand the more delicate one of the boy.

"God bless you!" murmured the lad faintly, and he closed his eyes. For a moment there was silence, the hot tears falling on his face as I leaned over him. At length he looked up; a smile of joy was on his countenance, and his lips moved. I put my ear to them and listened.

"Mother — father — I die happy, for we shall meet in heaven," were the words that fell in broken murmur from his lips, and then he sank back on my lap and was dead. The sun, at the instant, was just sinking behind the distant seaboard. Ah! little did his mother,

as she gazed on the declining luminary from her humble cottage window, thank that that sun beheld the dying hour of her boy. Little did she think, as she knelt that night in prayer for him, that she was praying for one whose silent corpse rocked far away on the tempestuous sea. Let us hope that when, in her sleep, she dreamed of hearing his loved voice once more, his spirit was hovering over her, whispering comfort in her ear. Thank God, that we can believe a bold spirit can visit the earth, and become ministering angels to us when we are left behind!

Another sun went and came, and even the strength of our hands began to give way. For twenty-three days we had doled out the painless sleep, and in all that time not a soul had appeared—nothing had met our sight but the brazen sky above and the ocean deep below. When the sun of the twenty-fourth day arose, very pale, there was not one of us whose strength was more than that of an infant; and though, at the first intimation of dawn, we gazed around the horizon as we were wont, there was little hope shown in our glazed eyes. Suddenly, however, the Captain's sharp command, and the color went and came into his face, breaking his agitation. Following the direction of his eyes, I saw a small, white speck far off on the horizon. I felt the blood rushing to my fingers, while a dizziness came over my sight. I could feel my heart, however, with an effort. At the same instant the voice of the captain appeared to give way, and waving his hand in a final adieu, he shouted,

"A sail! — a sail!"

"Whereaway?" eagerly asked a dozen feeble voices, while others of the crew were too far gone to speak, turned their fading eyes in the direction in which all were now looking.

"Just under yonder heavy cloud."

"I can't see it," said one, "surely there is a mistake."

"No — we are in the trough of the sea — wait till we rise — there!"

"I see it — I see it — huzzah!" shouted several.

A sudden animation seemed to pervade all. Some rose to their feet and clasping each other in their arms, went down again — some cast themselves on their knees and returned thanks to God — we all gazed devoutly from one face to another, every now and then bursting into hysterical laughter.

The approaching sail was apparently a merchantman of the largest class, and the number of her look-outs seemed to indicate that she was armed. Once we thought that she was about to alter her course — her head turned partially around and the arms of her sailors braced the wind — but, after a moment's anxious suspense, we saw her pursue her course, her head pointing directly towards us. It was at this we watched her in silence, eagerly awaiting the moment when we should perceive her flag-staff. But we were disappointed. Not a minute after midday passed by after we had ascertained that we were high enough to be seen, and yet the stranger appeared unconscious of our vicinity.

"She will pass us!" exclaimed Seton, the topman; "how can they avoid seeing our sail?"

"We must try to hold them," I said, "or we are lost."

"Ay — ay! it is our only chance," said the te-puran, and a grim smile passed over his face as he looked around on his emaciated shipmates, and added bitterly, "though it's little likely that such skeletons as we are can make ourselves heard to that distance."

"We will try," said I, and raising my hand to time the cry, I bade the ship. The sound rose feebly on the air and died waveringly away. But no symptoms of its being heard were perceptible on board the stranger.

"Again," I said, "once more!"

A second time the cry rose up from our boat, but this time with twice the volume than before. Still no look-out moved, and the ship kept on her course.

"A foul time, my lads," I said; "we are lost if they hear us not — ahoy!"

"Hello!" came floating down toward us, and a topman turned his face directly toward us, leaning his ear over the yard to listen.

"A-hoy! — A-hoy! — Ho-ho-hoy!" we shouted, joining our voices in a last desperate effort.

"Hello — boat away!" were the glad sounds that met our ears in the dark, and a dozen hands were extended to point out our location. At the instant, the ship gallantly swung around, and bore down directly toward us.

"They see us — praise the Lord — they see us — we are saved!" were the exclamations of the crew as they burst into hysterical tears, and fell on their knees in thanksgiving, again evoking the scene of rejoicing which had characterized the first discovery of the strange sail.

On came the wild, low-sloping sun like a sand-hill on the wing! Scores of curious faces were seen peering over her sides as she passed by, while from top and cross-trees a dozen look-outs gazed straight toward us. The sun was shining merrily on the waves, which sparkled in his beams like silver; while the murmur of the wind, or the deep roar of the surf, was a pleasant music to our ears. Oh! how different is every thing around us now from what it had appeared when we last left it from our hearts. And when, weak and timid as we were raised to the deck of the stranger, did not our hearts beat faster with gratitude to God? Let the tears that even our rescue did not explain,

"Wor — give us w^{or}t, for G^{od}'s sake," was the cry of my
host as I suggested to take

"I'll do now — more you shall have directly," answered the surgeon, as he stood between the half-frenzied men and the water-
can.

which they say the ravishes appetites of the crew were restrained, but to have suffered the men to eat in large quantities after so long

an abstinen^ee, woul^d have insured their speedy death. The crew were hurried to cots, while the captain insisted that I should share a portion of his own cabin.

It was many days before we were sufficiently recovered to venture with one to cross land; during our sickness we were treated with a kindness which was never forgot.

The steamer had w^{as} a privateer man, sailing under the American flag. We continued with her about two months, when it was found necessary to run into port. As we were nearly opposite Block Island, it was determined to stand in for Newport, where we arrived we landed, after an absence of nearly a year.

Here I found that we had been given up for lost. A bill of exchange of the DARR painted on it, having been picked up, with which it was concluded that all on board the vessel had perished. This belief had now become general, in consequence of the long time since we had been heard from. I was greeted, therefore, as one restored from the dead.

CHAPTER XVI.

HOM^E, SWEET HOM^E.

I was now alone in the world; I had neither ship, nor home; and she I had loved was well led to another. It is strange how a man, who has trodden a man's course, after a disappointment has such a strong position, and destroyed, once after another, the last vestiges of his youth. When I sat down and thought of the days of my earlier years, now gone forever; when I speculated upon my future prospects; when I reflected on what now was of the past; I could bring back with remorse, an infinite number of scenes of misery and pain; had it not been for my health, I would have fallen in tears. My zest for society was gone. I could have no pleasure in any business of life. I had lost all former interest in the world, after the service, and lost all my friends, so far as I could see, which I did not care to pursue, for a time. I had no money, either, since it reminded me how insufficient it was to depend upon the use of a woman. In a word, I had become a wretched wretch, and was fast losing all the energy of my character in a rapid decline over the past.

Of the St. Cler^s I had not inspired since my return, and the hours, from motives of delicacy perhaps, were few, when I was near my presence. Yet they occupied a large portion of my thoughts, and often would I start, and my heart flutter, when, in the sunsets

I fancied, for a moment, that I recognized the form of Annette. But a look of pain and evident misery told my mistake, and dissipated my delusion. Much, however as I thought of her, I had never known where she had been married; yet my curiosity on this point had never flagged; and when I had been a fortnight in New England, fearing any news on her, I began to wish that she would break the ominous silence which seemed to hang over her with her firmly. Still I durst not trust myself to speak to her. I contented, therefore, ignorant of their present whereabouts, and of all that concerned them.

I was not far from the town, and situated in one of the most beautiful parts of the island, a favorite resort which has long been known by the familiar and characteristic name of "the Glen." It is a spot where the deity of romance might sit enthroned. Here, on a summer night, we might, without much stretch of fancy, for fancies the earth and gaudel, or listen to the voices of airy spirits hovering above us. The whole place resounds of the laurel-flower, and dull must be his heart who does not feel the stirrings of the divinity within him as he gazes on the beauty of a woman. He who can listen here unmoved to the fragrance of the brack, or the light rustle of the leaves in the summer wind, must be freed of the easiest cloaks of clay, and be a despot of our human nature.

The Glen was my favorite resort, and dither would I grant spend whole hours, listening to the babbling prattle of the little river, the rustling of each, in gusts of the breeze, the murmur of the brook, the song. A noble bench had been constructed under some trees, conveniently open there, at the lower extremity of the ravine, and here I usually sat, indulging in the divinity, half-sick with pleasure, when am characterized by youth. The stream, which bounded down the ravine, in a series of rapids and eddies, here suddenly descends on a level bottom, its banks fringed with long grass, and with willows, and its bed strewed with pebbles, and stones, so gay, that a gaud in the sunbeams, which, here and there, peeped through the trees, and shone red on the stream, the red glow went over the sand of the bank, situated at the foot of the ravine; while constantly a bird whistled on the bank, and of the red birdy down into the river, and went on its way to the lake. The spot is one of my favorite retreats, distinguished by the appearance of strawberries, but as they generally grow at winter, I had the spot for most of the time to myself. Here I drew my heavy long-sleeved jacket, and lay until the sun had risen, to make the scene seem more beautiful, under her silvery light. I had no pleasure in a summer's day. Perchance it was because I had come here with Annette, when we were both younger, and I, at least, happier; and I could remember picking a flower for her from a time-worn bush that stood upon the margin of the stream. God knows how we used to haunt the soft meadow dear to us by old and tender recollections!

I was sitting, one afternoon, on the rude bench I have spoken of, listlessly casting pebbles into the river, when I heard the sound of approaching voices, but I was so accustomed to the visits of strangers, that I did not pause to look up. Directly the voices came nearer, and suddenly a word was spoken that thrilled through every nerve of my system. It was only a single word, but that voice! — surely it could be none other than Annette's. My sensations, at that moment, I will not pretend to analyze. I longed to look up and yet I dared not. My heart fluttered wildly, and I could feel the blood rushing in torrents to my face; but, if I had been called on at that instant to speak, I could not have complied for words. Luckily the tree, under whose shadow I sat, concealed me from the approaching visitors, and I had thus time to rally my spirits ere the strangers came up. As they drew near I recognized the voice of Mr. St. Clair, and that of Annette's cousin Isabel, while there were one or two other speakers who were strangers to me. Doubtless one of them was Annette's husband, and, as this thought flashed across me, I looked up, impelled by an irresistible impulse. The party were now within almost twenty yards, coming gaily down the glen. Foremost in the group walked Isabel, leaning on the arm of a tall, gentlemanly looking individual, and turning ever and anon around to Annette, who followed immediately behind, at the side of her father. Another lady, attended by a gentleman, made up the rest of the company. Where could Annette's husband be? was the question that occurred to me — and who was that distinguished looking gentleman on whose arm Isabel was so familiarly leaning? But my thoughts were cut short by a conversation which now began, and of which, during a minute, I was an unknown auditor — for my position still concealed me from the party, and my surprise at first, and afterward delicacy, prevented me from appearing.

"Ah! Annette," said Isabel, archly turning around to her core in, "do you know this spot, but especially that rose-bush yonder? — here, right beyond that old tree — you seem wonderfully ignorant all at once! I wonder where the donor of that affresca is now. I would lay a guinea that it is yet in your possession, preserved in some favorite book, pressed out between the leaves. Come, answer frankly, is it not so, my sweet coz?"

I could hear no reply, if one was made, and immediately another voice spoke. It was that of Isabel's companion, coming to the side of Annette.

"You are too much given to believe that Annette follows your example, Isobel — now do you turn penitent, and let me be your confessor — how many roses-bushes, — ay! and for that matter, even leaves, have you in your collection, presented to you by your humble servant, before we had pity on each other, and were married? I found a flower, last week, in a copy of *Spectator*, and if I remember right, I was the donor of the trifle."

"Oh! you betray yourself," gaily retorted Isabel; "but men are foolish — and of all foolish men I ever met with, a certain Alcott

Marston was, before his marriage, the most foolish. I take credit to myself," she continued, in the same playful strain, "for having caused such a reformation in him since that event. But this is not what we were talking of — you wish to divert me from my purpose by this light Cossack warfare — but it won't do," she continued, and I feared she thought her shot pretty well, as she was wont to do at Carrville Hall, when she was disposed to have her way; "no — no — Annette must be the one to turn penitent, and I will play father-confessor. Say, now, fair coz, was it not a certain fancy to see the sun reborn, that induced you to insist on coming here?"

During this conversation the parties had remained near and stationary at some distance from me. Strange suspicions began to pass through my mind, as soon as Isabel commenced her bunter; and these suspicions had now been changed into a certainty. Annette was still unmarried, and it was Isabel's wedding at which I had the honour of being present, at Clunville Hall. Nor was this all. I was still loved. Oa! the will, the rapturous feelings of that moment. I could with difficulty restrain myself from rising and running toward them; but motives of delicacy forbade me thus to reveal that the conversation had been overheard. And yet should I remain in my present position, and play the listener still further? I knew not what to do. All these considerations flashed through my mind in the space of less than a minute, during which the party had been silent, apparently enjoying Annette's confusion.

"Come, let me reply to answer yet?" began Isabel; "well, if you will not, you shan't have the rose from that bush, for which you've come. Let us go back," she said playfully.

The whole party seemed to enter into the jest, and laughingly retraced their steps. This afforded me the opportunity for which I longed. Hustly rising from my seat, I glided unnoticed from tree to tree, until I reached a copse on the left of the glen, and advancing up the ravine, under cover of this screen, I re-entered the path at the bend some distance above the St. Clairs. Here I listened for a moment, and caught the sound of their approaching voices. Determined no longer to be a listener to their conversation, I proceeded down the glen, and, as I turned the corner, a few paces in advance, I came full in sight of the approaching group. In an instant the gay laughing of the party ceased, and I saw Annette shrink back behind her father. Isabel was the first to speak. Darting forward, with that frankness and gaiety which always characterized her, she grasped my hand, and said —

"You won't know how happy we all are to see you. Where could you have come from? — and how could you have made such a mistake as to engrandize Annette, instead of me, on being married? but come, I must surrender you to the others — I see they are dying to speak to you. Uncle, Annette — how lucky it was that we came here to-day!"

"My dear boy," said Mr. St. Clair, warmly pressing my hand, "I can not tell how rejoiced I am to see you. We heard a re-

mor that you were lost, and we all went — Isabell for the first time for years. It was but a few days since, that we heard you were at Newport, and, as we were coming hither, I hastened my journal, determined to start my yesterday. We are on our way thence now, and only stopped here a few minutes to refresh ourselves after a long ride. This day shall be marked with a white stone. But here I have been keeping you from speaking to Amnette — we all know, you know are apt to be garrulous."

My eyes, indeed, had been seeking Amnette, who, still covered with blushes, and unable to control her emotions, sought to conceal them by keeping in the background. As for me I had become wonderfully self-possessed. I now whistled out into her hand. It trembled in my own, and when I spoke, though she responded faintly, she did not dare to look into my face, except for a moment, after which her eyes again sought the ground in shame and embarrassment. My unexpected appearance, combined with the blushes which covered her face with blushes, and for some time she could not rally herself sufficient to participate in the conversation.

What more have I to tell? I was now happy, — and for my mother's sake, it did with the cause that produced it. Mr. St. Clair said that the wedding need not be delayed, and in less than a month I led Amnette to the altar. Years have flown since then, but I still enjoy undimmed felicity, and Amnette seems to my eyes more beautiful than ever. It only remains for me to bid my readers — FAREWELL.

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Tasso's Coronation. For male and female.
Fashion. For two ladies.
The Rehearsal. For six boys.
Which will you Choose? For two boys.
The Queen of May. For two little girls.
The Tea-Party. For four ladies.
Three Scenes in Wedded Life. Male and female.
Mrs. Saffier's Confession. For male and female.
The Mission of the Spirits. Five young ladies.

Hobnobbing. For five speakers.
The Secret of Success. For three speakers.
Young America. Three males and two females.
Josephine's Destiny. Four females, one male.
The Folly of the Duel. For three male speakers.
Dogmatism. For three male speakers.
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The Fast Young Man. For two males.
The Year's Reckoning. 12 females and 1 male.
The Village with One Gentleman. For eight males and one male.

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The Gift of the Fairy Queen. Several females.
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Trying the Characters. For three males.
The Happy Family. For several "animals."
The Rainbow. For several characters.

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The New and the Old. For two males.
A Sensation at Last. For two males.
The Greenhorn. For two males.
The Three Men of Science. For four males.
The Old Lady's Will. For four males.
The Little Philosophers. For two little girls.
How to Find an Heir. For five males.
The Virtues. For six young ladies.
A Cannibal Eulogy.
The Public meeting. Five males and one female.
The English Traveler. For two males.

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The May Queen. For an entire school.
Dress Reform Convention. For ten females.
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Courting Under Difficulties. 2 males, 1 female.
National Representatives. A Burlesque. 4 males.
Escaping the Draft. For numerous males.

The Gentle Cook. For two males.
Masterpiece. For two males and two females.
The Two Romans. For two males.
The Same. Second scene. For two males.
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The Battle Cry. A Recitative. For one male.

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The Frost King. For ten or more persons.
Starting in Life. Three males and two females.
Faith, Hope and Charity. For three little girls.
Darby and Joan. For two males and one female.
The May. A Floral Fancy. For six little girls.
The Enchanted Princess. 2 males, several females.
Honor to Whom Honor is Due. 7 males, 1 female.
The Gentle Client. For several males, one female.
Phrenology. A Discussion. For twenty males.

The Stubbetown Volunteer. 2 males, 1 female.
A Scene from "Paul Pry." For four males.
The Charms. For three males and one female.
Bee, Clock and Broom. For three little girls.
The Right Way. A Colloquy. For two boys.
What the Ledger Says. For two males.
The Crimes of Dress. A Colloquy. For two boys.
The Reward of Benevolence. For four males.
The Letter. For two males.

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Sentiment. A "Three Person?" Farce.
Behind the Curtain. For males and females.
The Eta Pi Society. Five boys and a teacher.
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Trading in "Traps." For several males.
The School Boys' Tribunal. For ten boys.
A Loose Tongue. Several males and females.
How Not to Get an Answer. For two females.

Putting on Airs. A Colloquy. For two males.
The Straight Mark. For several boys.
Two Ideas of Life. A Colloquy. For ten girls.
Extract from Marino Faliero.
Ma-try-Money. An Acting Charade.
The Six Virtues. For six young ladies.
The Irishman at Home. For two males.
Fashionable Requirements. For three girls.
A Bevy of U's (Eyes). For eight or less little girls.

DIME DIALOGUES, NO. 6.

The Way They Kept a Secret. Male and females.
The Post under Difficulties. For five males.
William Tell. For a whole school.
Woman's Rights. Seven females and two males.
All is not Gold that Glitters. Male and females.
The Generous Jew. For six males.
Scrooping. For three males and one female.

The Two Counselors. For three males.
The Votaries of Folly. For a number of females.
Aunt Betsy's Beaux. Four females and two males.
The Libel Suit. For two females and one male.
Santa Claus. For a number of boys.
Christmas Fairies. For several little girls.
The Three Rings. For two males.

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Dat's wat's de matter,
The Mississippi miracle,
Ven te tide cooms in,
Dose laus vot Mary has
got,
Pat O'Flaherty on wo-
man's rights,
The home rulers, how
they "spakee,"
Heriklah Dawson on
Mothers-in-law,
He didn't sell the farm,
The true story of Frank-
lin's kite,
(would I were a boy
again,
A pathetic story,

All about a bee,
Scandal,
A dark side view,
Te pesser vay,
On learning German,
Mary's shmall vite lamb
A healthy discourse,
Tobias so to speak,
Old Mrs. Grimes,
A parody,
Mars and cats,
Bill Underwood, pilot,
Old Granley,
The pill peddler's ora-
tion,
Widder Green's last
words,

Latest Chinese outrage,
The manitest destiny of
the Irishman,
Peggy McCann,
Sprays from Josh BUL-
Jings,
De circumstances ob de
sitiwation,
Dar's nuffin new under
de sun,
A Negro religious poem,
That violin,
Picnic delights,
Our c-ndidate's views,
Dundresry's wisdom,
Plain language by truth-
ful Jane,

My neighbor's dogs,
Condensed Mythology,
Pictus,
The Nereides,
Legends of Attila,
The stove-pipe tragedy
A doketor's drubblies,
The coming man,
The illigant affair at
Muldoon's,
That little baby tol
the corner,
A genewine inferno,
An invitation to
bird of liberty,
The crow,
Out west.

DIME READINGS AND RECITATIONS, No. 24.

The Irishman's pano-
rama,
The lightning-rod agent
The tragedy at four ace
flat,
Ruth and Naomi,
Carey of Corson,
Babies,
John Reed,
The brakeman at
church,
Passun Moah's sur-
mount,
Arguing the question
Him Wolle and the cats,

The dim old forest,
Rasher at home,
The Sergeant's story,
David and Goliah,
Dreaming at fourscore,
Rum,
Why should the spirit
of mortal be proud?
The coming mustache,
The engineer's story,
A candidate for presi-
dent,
Roll call,
An accession to the
family,

When the cows come
home,
The donation party,
Tommy Taß,
A Michigander in
France,
Not one to spare,
Mrs. Breezy's pink
lunch,
Rock of ages,
J. Caesar Pompey
Squash's sermon,
Annie's ticket,
The newsboy,
Pat's correspondence,

Death of th' ewd squire
Mein tog Shneid,
At Elberon,
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